AN

EXPOSITION

ON THE

Lord's Prayer,

WITH A

Catechiſtical Explication

Thereof, by way of

QUESTION and *ANSWER*,

For the Inſtructing of YOUTH:

To which is added ſome

SERMONS

On *Providence*, and the *Excellent Advantages* of *Reading* and *Studying* the Holy *Scriptures*.

By *EZEKIEL HOPKINS*, late Lord Biſhop of *London-Derry*.

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THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

Chriſtian Reader,

THe *following* Diſcourſes *upon that Excellent and Divine* Prayer *of our Bleſſed Saviour, contain ſo much of* Practical Divinity *neceſſary to be known by all Chriſtians, and are ſo Solidly and Judiciouſly handled, that they need no* Epiſtle *Recommendatory unto the World, having the Stamp of the* Divine Authority *upon the Truths contained in them.*

But

But if any ſhall curiouſly enquire, whether this Reverend and Learned Prelate *deſigned and finiſhed them for the* Preſs: *I may truly return the ſame* Anſwer *that is given in Print by the preſent* Biſhop *of* Cork *and* Roſs *to the ſame* Queſtion, *in his* Epiſtle *to the* Reader *before this* Author's Expoſition *on the* Ten Commandments; *namely, That they were Tranſcribed by himſelf, and by him depoſited in the hands of a Miniſter whom he could intruſt, to be made* Publick *after his Deceaſe; whoſe* Epiſtle *ſhould have been prefixed hereunto, but that he is far diſtant in another Nation, and the* Preſs *cannot tarry ſo long for it, the Book being juſt finiſhed.*

And as a further Confirmation that his Lordſhip *intended it ſhould be made* Publick, *appears by his ſo often quoting this his Diſcourſe on the* Lord's Prayer, *in his Treatiſe on the* Commandments, *which could*

could not be seen or read by others but by the Printing *of it. Upon which many Persons have been very desirous and inquisitive after it.*

Unto this large and general Expositon *on the* Lord's Prayer, *there is added a brief and short* Catechistical Explication *thereof by way of* Question *and* Answer, *made use of by his* Lordship *for the instructing of the younger and more ignorant Christians in the Knowledge and Understanding of those Divine and Heavenly Truths contained in this most Excellent Prayer.*

And for a Conclusion *of all, there are added several* Sermons *Preached by this Learned* Prelate, *upon the* Providence of God, *and on the* Excellency *and* Usefulness *of* Reading *and* Studying *the* Holy Scriptures. *All which have been diligently and carefully perused by several Persons of the* Author's *Acquaintance, both of the*

Clergy

Clergy *and others, with very good Acceptance and Satisfaction; and the whole is now with Approbation expoſed unto publick view.*

And that the preſent Publication of them may tend much to the promoting of the Honour *and* Glory *of God, and the Edification of many Souls in Grace and Holineſs, is the hearty Prayer of the Publiſher.* Farewell.

The Vanity of the World, with other Sermons, in *Octavo.*

Diſcourſes and Sermons on ſeveral Scriptures, in *Octavo.*

An *Expoſition* on the *Ten Commandments*, with other Sermons, in *Quarto.*

All Written by *Ezekiel Hopkins*, late Lord Biſhop of *London-Derry*, and Sold by *Nathanael Ranew.*

A Practical EXPOSITION ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Matth. VI. 9, 10. &c.

After this manner therefore Pray ye, Our Father which art in Heaven: Hallowed be thy Name: Thy Kingdom come: Thy Will be done, in Earth as it is in Heaven: Give us this Day our daily Bread: And forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors: And lead us not into Temptation: But deliver us from Evil: For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever. Amen.

HAving often ſeriouſly conſidered with my ſelf of the great uſe that is made of this moſt excellent Form of Prayer, compoſed by our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour himſelf; as alſo of the great Benefit and Advantage that might

accrue unto all thoſe, that with underſtanding make a due uſe of it in their daily Devotions: I thought it might be very neceſſary for your Inſtruction, and greatly conducible unto your Salvation, to lay before your conſideration, as brief and ſuccinct an Expoſition thereof, as the large extent, and various copiouſneſs of the matter contained therein, will permit.

The Bleſſed Apoſtle, St. *Paul*, in 1 *Cor.* 14. 15. tells us, *That he would pray with the Spirit, and he would pray with Underſtanding alſo.* And indeed when we pray, to pray with Underſtanding what we pray, is one great requiſite to make our Prayers Spiritual, and through the prevailing Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt to become acceptable unto God the Father. But to mutter over a road of Words only, (as the Papiſts are taught, and as multitudes of many ignorant Perſons among us do alſo,) without underſtanding what they ſignifie, or being duly affected with thoſe Wants and Neceſſities which we beg of God the Supplies of, is not to offer up a Prayer unto the Almighty, but only to make a Charm.

Now, becauſe there is no Form of Prayer, that ever we have heard or read of, that is deſervedly ſo much in uſe, as this of our Lord's is, I ſhall endeavour in ſome Diſcourſes thereupon, to unfold to you thoſe Voluminous Requeſts which we offer up unto God, when we thus pray, as our Saviour here teacheth us; wherein, as I doubt not but as I may greatly inſtruct the Ignorance of many, ſo poſſibly I may bring very much to the remembrance of thoſe who have attained to great underſtanding in Religion, thoſe things which may provoke their Zeal, and excite their Affections; and both theſe Undertakings, through the Bleſſing of God upon it, may be very uſefully profitable to enable them to pray with Underſtanding, and with the Spirit alſo, when they approach the Throne of Grace,

to

to preſent their Petitions unto the Great God, as by the Interceſſion, ſo in the Words of his dear Son.

In this Chapter, which contains in it a great part of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, our Lord lays before his Hearers ſeveral Directions concerning two neceſſary Duties in a Chriſtian's Practice; and they are Alms-giving and Prayer; the former a Duty relating more immediately unto Men; the latter a Duty in a more eſpecial manner reſpecting God himſelf; in both which he not only cautions us againſt, but ſtrictly forbids all Oſtentation and Vain-Glory. *Therefore*, ſays he, *when thou doſt thine Alms, do not ſound a Trumpet before thee, for this is the Practice of Hypocrites, that they may have Glory of Men*, verſe 2. *And when thou prayeſt be not as the Hypocrites, for they love to pray in the Synagogues, and Corners of the Streets, that they may be ſeen of Men*, verſe 5. Thus muſt we not do in either of theſe Caſes: For as we muſt not give Alms that we may be ſeen of Men, ſo neither muſt we pray that we may be heard and obſerved of Men: For what can be more abſurd and ridiculous, as well as wicked and impious, than to be begging Applauſe from ſome, when we are giving Alms to others; or whilſt we are praying to the great God of Heaven and Earth, to make frail mortal Men, like our ſelves, our Idols; which we do, whenſoever we pray, rather that we may be heard and admired by Men, than that God ſhould hear us and accept us.

In the next words our Saviour proceeds in laying down ſome other Directions concerning the Duty of Prayer, and therein he forbids his Hearers to uſe vain Repetitions in Prayer: *verſe 7. When you Pray, uſe not vain Repetitions as the Heathens do.* Not that all Repetitions in Prayer are vain bablings, in the ſight of God; for our Lord himſelf Prayed thrice uſing the ſame words, for ſo we read *Matth.* 26. and 44. For doubtleſs as Copiouſneſs and Variety of fluent Expreſſions in any, uſually flow from raiſed Affecti-

ons; ſo when thoſe Affections are heightned and raiſed to an Ecſtaſy and Agony of Soul in our wreſtlings with God in Prayer, Ingeminations are then the moſt Proper and moſt Elegant way of expreſſing them, doubling and redoubling the ſame Petitions again and again; not allowing God (if I may ſo ſpeak with Holy Reverence) ſo much time, nor our ſelves ſo much leaſure, as to form in our minds, much more with our Lips to offer up any new requeſts, till by a Holy Violence in wreſtling with God, we have extorted out of his hands thoſe Mercies and Bleſſings our Hearts are ſet upon the ſuing to him for. Vain Repetitions therefore are ſuch as are made uſe of by any without new and lively Stirrings and Motions of the Heart and Affections at the ſame time. And that which makes a Prayer vain, makes a Repetition in Prayer to be vain alſo. Now that is a vain Prayer, and we ſhall certainly find it ſo, when the requeſts we offer up to God therein, are heartleſs and lifeleſs. For we muſt know, God hath Commanded us to Pray; not that he might be excited and moved by hearing the Voice of our Cries in Prayer, to give unto us thoſe Mercies and Bleſſings, which he himſelf was not reſolved before hand to beſtow upon us; but that we our ſelves might be fitted and prepared to receive from him, what he is always ready and willing to confer upon us. He requires Prayer from us, not that he might be affected therewith; for as the Apoſtle St. *James* tells us, *With him there is no variableneſs nor ſhadow of turning*, James 1. 17. but that we our ſelves might have our Hearts raiſed and affected therewith. And therefore the chiefeſt effect of Prayer being to affect our ſelves, if Prayer it ſelf be not vain, neither are Repetitions in Prayer vain, if whilſt we are ſpreading the ſame requeſts before God, we do it with new Affections and Deſires. No Prayer therefore ought to be accuſed of idle Babling and vain Repetitions; but thoſe that Pray may (I fear) too often be charged with it. And here by the way, I deſire all thoſe who

who are offended at, or refuſe to joyn with the Stated Forms of Prayer that the Church hath appointed to be made uſe of either in publick or private, becauſe the ſame requeſts do many times occur therein; to keep a ſtrict Eye upon their Hearts and Affections, and then the Scruples and Objections that they make, will preſently be removed, for it is much in their own Power to make them to be, either vain Repetitions, or the moſt fervent Ingeminations of their moſt affectionate Deſires unto God, and the moſt Spiritual and Forcible part of all their Prayers and Supplications they offer up unto him.

But then further as our Saviour forbids vain Repetitions in Prayer, ſo he likewiſe forbids much ſpeaking: for they think, ſays our Saviour, St. *Matth.* 6. 7. *That they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking.* Now as the former Prohibition doth not exclude all Repetitions in Prayer, ſo neither doth this latter exclude (as ſome Ignorant Perſons perhaps who are ſoon wearied out with the Service of God, may be apt to think) long Prayers: for this would be a flat contradiction to his own practice, for it is ſaid in St. *Luke* 6. 12. *That he went out into a Mountain to Pray, and continued all night in Prayer unto God.*

Some indeed take the word προσευχῇ Prayer, to ſignifie the Houſe of Prayer, as if our Saviour continued only in ſuch a Dedicated Houſe or Chappel all night, according as *Juvenal* uſeth the word, *in quâ te quæro proſencha.* Yet as it will be hard to prove that the *Jews* had any ſuch Houſes for Prayer, beſides their *Synagogues*, which were not ſeated in Deſolate (whither our Saviour went then to Pray) but in Populous Cities and frequented Places: So it will be more hard to imagine that our Saviour would continue all night in the Houſe of Prayer, if he had not been taken up in the performance of the Duty of Prayer.

There is therefore a great deal of difference between much ſpeaking in Prayer, and ſpeaking much in Prayer; for

for certainly a Man may ſpeak much to God in prayer, when yet he may not be guilty of much ſpeaking: for there is a compendious way of ſpeaking, to ſpeak much in a little; and there is a babling way of ſpeaking, when by many tedious Ambages and long Impertinencies men pour out a Sea of Words, and ſcarce one drop of Sence or Matter.

Now it is this laſt way of ſpeaking unto God which our Saviour here condemns; and condemns it juſtly, for it ſhews either Folly or Irreverence: Folly, in that it is a ſign we do not ſufficiently conſider what we ask: Irreverence, in that it is a ſign we do not conſider of whom we ask: and ſuch men are rather to be eſteemed talkative than devout.

But when a man's Soul is full fraught with matter (of which if he duly weighs, either his Spiritual wants, or his Temporal Sorrows and Afflictions, he can never be unfurniſhed) to pour out his Soul, and with a torrent of Holy Rhetorick, lay open his Caſe before God, begging ſeaſonable ſupplies in ſuitable expreſſions, certainly he cannot fall under the reproof of much ſpeaking, although he may ſpeak much and long: for ſuch an one hath much to ſay, and whilſt Matter and Affections laſt, let his prayer be an hour long, yea a day long, yea an eternity long, as our Praiſes ſhall be in Heaven, he is not to be cenſured for a Babler, but hath ſtill ſpoken much in a little.

It is true, the Wiſe Man hath Commanded, *That our words be few in our Addreſſes to God*, Eccleſ. 5. 2. and he gives a moſt forcible Reaſon; *For God is in Heaven and thou upon Earth.* His Infinite Majeſty ſhould therefore over-awe thee from uſing any raſh and vain loquacity. But yet this makes not againſt long prayers; for many words may be but a few to expreſs the ſentiments of our Souls; and none can be too many, while the Heart keeps Pace with the Tongue, and every Petition is filled with Matter, and winged with Affections.

And

And whereas our Saviour condemns the Phariſees, *who devoured Widows Houſes, and for a pretence made long Prayers*, Matth. 23. 14. yet certain it is, that it was not their long Prayers that he condemns, but their Pretence and Hypocriſie. Thus much I thought fit to obſerve from the Context.

Our Saviour having thus cautioned his Diſciples againſt the Sins of the Phariſees and Heathens in their Prayers, comes in the Words I have read, to inſtruct them how to pray. *After this manner therefore pray ye, Our Father*, &c.

Some taking advantage from theſe Words, deny this to be uſed as a Prayer it ſelf; but only as a Model and Platform to direct us how to pray.

But if we conſult not only the practice of the Church of Chriſt in all Ages, but the Scripture it ſelf, we ſhall find it to be both the one and the other; for it is our Saviour's expreſs Injunction, *Luke* 11. 2. *When ye pray, ſay*; and what ſhould they ſay, but the Words immediately following, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c? One Evangeliſt ſays, *Pray after this manner*; the other ſaith, *When ye pray, ſay*; from both which, compared together, it is eaſie to collect, that it is both a Pattern for us to form our Prayers by, and that it is a Prayer it ſelf; which our Saviour, in condeſcention to our Infirmities, hath framed for us; putting Words into our Mouths, to beg of God thoſe Bleſſings, which through his moſt prevalent Interceſſion ſhall not be denied us.

And indeed of all Prayers this is the moſt abſolute and comprehenſive, containing in it, not ſo many Words as Petitions; for there is not any one thing that we can pray for, according to the Will of God, but it is ſummarily couch'd in this.

And yet this Comprehenſiveneſs, which is the admirable Excellency of this Prayer, hath been the only Reaſon why ſome of late have ſcrupled and refuſed to uſe it; becauſe they can-

cannot pierce through all that is ſignified by theſe ſubſtantial Expreſſions; they think they ſhould take God's Name in vain, in uttering that before him, which they do not underſtand the utmoſt extent of.

But if they did but conſider their own Prayers, the ſame doubts would ſtill remain. When they pray that God's Name may be glorified; can they comprehend in that ſhort time, while they are uttering thoſe Words, the infinite Latitude of that Requeſt? Is it unlawful, at the cloſe of our Prayers, to deſire that God would give us all good things which we have not mentioned before him? And yet who of us can conceive how large an extent that Requeſt may have? May we not ſay, *Amen*, and Seal up our Prayers with a *So be it*; though while we are ſpeaking it, we cannot preſently recollect all that hath been mentioned before God in Prayer? And for any to ſay, that the Lord's Prayer is a Morſel too big for their Mouths, (as ſome have done,) I have always accounted it a moſt unworthy and unſavory Speech. Certainly Chriſt thought it not too big for his Diſciples, whoſe Capacities at that time were poſſibly none of the largeſt; as appears in many inſtances, particularly in the Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom, which he taught them to pray that it might come, which they thought to be Temporal and Earthly. And thoſe who refuſe the uſe of the Lord's Prayer, as too big for them, would yet think themſelves much wronged, if we ſhould but ſuſpect them as ignorant in that, and in many other points of Chriſtian Doctrine, as the Diſciples were when our Saviour inſtructed them thus to pray.

It being therefore, as I hope, clear and evident, that we may often pray in theſe Words, and that we muſt always pray after this manner; let us now proceed to conſider the Prayer it ſelf, in which there are theſe Four parts.

Firſt,

First, The Preface or Introduction to it.

Secondly, The Petitions or Requeſts we preſent to God, in which the greateſt part of it conſiſts.

Thirdly, the Doxology, or Praiſe-giving; for Praiſe is a neceſſary part of Prayer.

Fourthly, The Concluſion, or Ratification of all, in the Sealing Particle, *Amen*.

I ſhall ſpeak ſomewhat of theſe briefly in the general, and then more particularly of each as my Text directs me.

First, For the Introduction or Preface unto the Prayer, and that is contained in theſe Words, *Our Father which art in Heaven*. This is uſed as a preparative to Prayer: And what greater inducement can there be to diſpoſe us into a holy awe and reverence of God, than to ſet before us the Greatneſs and Glory of that Majeſty before whom we proſtrate our ſelves? And therefore we find that the Saints in Scripture, in all their approaches to the Throne of Grace, were wont in the beginning of their Prayers, to affect and over-awe their Hearts with the humble mention of God's Glorious Attributes. Thus *Solomon*, 1 *Kings* 8. 23. *O Lord God of* Iſrael, *there is no God like unto thee, in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, who keepeſt Covenant and Mercy with thy Servants*. Thus *Jehoſaphat*, 2 Chron. 20. 6. *O Lord God of our Fathers, art not thou God in Heaven, and ruleſt not thou over all the Kingdoms of the Heathens, and in thy Hand is there not Power and Might?* So *Hezekiah*, 2 King. 19. 15. *O Lord God of* Iſrael, *who dwelleſt between the* Cherubims, *thou art God, even thou alone, who haſt made Heaven and Earth*. And ſo the Prophet, *Jerem.* 32. 17. *Ah Lord God, behold, thou haſt made the Heaven and the Earth, by thy great Power and ſtretched-out Arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. The great, the mighty God, the Lord of Hoſts*

is his Name, great in Counſel, and mighty in Working. And thus our Saviour himſelf, *Matth.* 11. 25. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth.* And ſo the Apoſtle, *Acts* 4. 24. *Lord, thou art God that haſt made Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all that in them is.* And thus to conſider ſeriouſly of, and reverently to expreſs the infinitely Glorious Attributes of God, is an excellent means to compoſe us into a holy fear and awe of God, ſuch as becomes vile Duſt and Aſhes to be affected with, when it ſtands in the preſence of its great Lord and Creator: Only here let us remember, that we dwell not ſo long upon the Titles and Attributes of God, nor run ſo much out into Preface, as to forget our errand unto him.

Secondly, Next after the Preface, we have the Petitions following in their order. Of theſe ſome reckon ſix, others ſeven; but which ſoever we take, the matter is not great: They may all be reduced under two General Heads.

Firſt, Such as reſpect God's Glory.

Secondly, Such as reſpect our ſelves and others. The Three firſt reſpect God's Glory, and the Three or Four laſt our own Good; and that either Temporal or Spiritual. Temporal, in begging at God's Hands our daily Bread. Spiritual, in deſiring both the Pardon of and Deliverance from Sin.

And here again we may obſerve the admirable Order and Method of this Prayer, in that our Saviour hath placed the Petition, which refers to our Temporal Good, as it were in the very midſt and centre of it, it being encompaſſed round about with Petitions for Heavenly and Spiritual Bleſſings. And this may intimate to us, that we are only to bait at the World in our Paſſage and Journey to Heaven, that we ought to begin with Spirituals and end with Spirituals, but only to take up and refreſh our ſelves a little with our daily Bread in our way.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, In the Doxology, or Praiſe, there are Four things contained.

Firſt, God's Sovereignty, *Thine is the Kingdom.*

Secondly, God's Omnipotency, *And the Power.*

Thirdly, God's Excellency, *And the Glory.*

Fourthly, The Eternity and Unchangableneſs of them, and of all God's other Attributes, noted to us in that Expreſſion, *For ever.*

Fourthly, and *Laſtly*, Here is the ratifying Particle, *Amen*, added as a Seal to the whole Prayer, and it importeth a deſire to have that confirmed or granted which we have prayed for. And thus *Benaiah* when he had received Inſtructions from *David*, concerning the eſtabliſhing of *Solomon* in the Kingdom, anſwereth thereto *Amen*; and explains it, 1 *Kings* 1. 36. *The Lord God of my Lord the King ſay ſo too.* So that when we add this Word, *Amen*, at the end and cloſe of our Prayers, it is as much as if we had ſaid, *the Lord God ſay ſo too*; or the Lord grant theſe Requeſts: For the proper ſignification of *Amen*, is, *ſo be it*, or *ſo it is*, or *ſo it ſhall be*; the former notes our Deſires, the latter our confidence and aſſurance of being heard.

Now of all theſe Four parts, of which this *Prayer* is compoſed, I ſhall ſpeak in their order.

Firſt therefore, Let us conſider the Preface in theſe Words, *Our Father which art in Heaven.* And here God is deſcribed by two of his moſt eminent *Attributes*, his *Grace* and *Glory*, his *Goodneſs* and his *Greatneſs*; by the one, in that he is ſtiled, *Our Father*; by the other, in that he is ſaid to be *in Heaven*: And both theſe are moſt ſweetly tempered together, to beget in us a Holy Mixture of Filial Boldneſs and aweful Reverence, which are ſo neceſſary to the ſanctifying of *God's Name* in all our Addreſſes to him. We are commanded to *come to the Throne of Grace with boldneſs*, *Heb.* 4. 16. and yet, *to ſerve God acceptably with reverence and with fear*, Heb. 12. 28. Yea, and indeed the very cal-

ling of it a *Throne of Grace*, intimates both theſe Affections at once. It is a *Throne*, and therefore requires Awe and Reverence; but it is a *Throne of Grace* too, and therefore permits holy Freedom and Confidence. And ſo we find all along in the Prayers of the *Saints*, how they mix the conſideration of God's Mercy, and his Majeſty together, in the very *Prefaces* and Preparations to their Prayers. So *Neh.* 1. 5. *Lord God of Heaven, the great and terrible God that keepeth Covenant and Mercy for them that love him.* So *Dan.* 9. 4. *O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping Covenant and Mercy for them that love him.* Now this excellent mixture of aweful and encouraging Attributes, will keep us from both the Extreams, of Deſpair on the one Hand, and of Preſumption on the other. He is *our Father*, and this may correct the deſpairing Fear which might otherwiſe ſeize us upon the conſideration of his *Majeſty* and *Glory*: And he is likewiſe infinitely Glorious, a God whoſe *Throne* is in the higheſt Heavens, and the Earth his *Foot-ſtool*. And this may correct the preſumptuous irreverence, which elſe the conſideration of God, as *our Father*, might perhaps embolden us unto.

Now here I ſhall *firſt* ſpeak of the Relation of God unto us as a *Father*, and then of the Place of his Glory and Reſidence, *in Heaven*, and of both but briefly; for I muſt not dwell upon every particular.

Firſt, To begin with the Relation of God to us, as a *Father*. Now God is a *Father* Three ways.

Firſt, God is a *Father* by Eternal Generation.

Secondly, By Temporal Creation and Providence.

Thirdly, By Spiritual Regeneration and Adoption.

Firſt, God is a *Father* by Eternal Generation; having by an inconceivable and ineffable way begotten his Son, God Co-equal, Co-eternal with himſelf; and therefore called, *The only begotten Son of God*, Joh. 3. 16. Thus God is a *Father*, only to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, according to his Divine Nature.

ture. And whenſoever this Title, *Father*, is given to God, with relation to the Eternal Sonſhip of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, it denotes only the Firſt Perſon in the ever Bleſſed Trinity; who is therefore chiefly and eſpecially called the *Father*.

Secondly, God is a *Father* by Temporal Creation, as he gives a Being and Exiſtence to his Creatures; creating thoſe whom he made Rational after his own Image and Similitude. And therefore *God* is ſaid to be a *Father of Spirits*, Heb. 12. 9. And the *Angels* are called the Sons of God, *Job* 1. 6. *There was a day when the Sons of God came to preſent themſelves before the Lord.* And ſo *Adam* upon the account of his Creation, is called the Son of God, *Luke* 3. 38. where the *Evangeliſt* runs up the *Genealogy* of Mankind till it terminates in God, *Who was the Son of Adam, who was the Son of God.*

Thirdly, God is ſaid to be a *Father* by Spiritual Regeneration and Adoption, and ſo all true Believers are ſaid to be the Sons of God, and to be born of God, *John* 1. 12, 13. *To as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to as many as believed on his Name, which were born not of the will of Man, but of God.* So *Rom.* 8. 17. we are ſaid *to receive the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father. For the Spirit it ſelf witneſſeth with our Spirits that we are the Children of God.*

Now in theſe two laſt Significations, this Expreſſion, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, is to be underſtood, and ſo they denote, not any one particular Perſon of the Bleſſed *Trinity*, but it is a relative Attribute belonging equally to all the Three Perſons. God is the *Father* of all Men by *Creation* and Providence; and he is eſpecially the *Father* of the Faithful by *Regeneration* and *Adoption*. Now as theſe Actions of Creation, Regeneration and Adoption, are common to the whole *Trinity*, ſo likewiſe is the Title of *Father*. God the firſt Perſon in the Bleſſed *Trinity*, is indeed Eminently

nently called the *Father*, but not in reſpect of us, but in reſpect of Chriſt, his only begotten Son from all Eternity. In reſpect of us the whole *Trinity* is *our Father which is in Heaven*, both *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, and in praying to our *Father*, we pray to them all joyntly, for Chriſt the Second Perſon in the *Trinity* is expreſly called the *Father*, Iſa. 9. 6. *Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and his Name ſhall be called Wonderful Councellor, the Mighty God, the Everlaſting Father.* And we are ſaid to be born of the Spirit, *John* 3. 5. *Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit.*

Now that God ſhould be pleaſed to take this into his Glorious Style, even to be called *Our Father*, it may teach us,

Firſt, To admire his Infinite Condeſcenſion, and our own unſpeakable Privilege and Dignity. 1 *John* 3. 1. *Behold what manner of Love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the Sons of God.* Indeed for God to be a *Father* by *Creation* and *Providence*, though it be a Mercy, yet is no Privilege; for in that Sence he is, *Parens Rerum*, the common Parent of all things, yea the *Father* of *Devils* themſelves, and of thoſe Wretches who are as wicked and ſhall be as miſerable as *Devils*. But that God ſhould be thy *Father* by *Regeneration* and *Adoption*, that he ſhould make thee his Son through his only begotten Son: that he ſhould rake up ſuch dirt and filth as thou art, and lay it in his Boſom; that he ſhould take Aliens and Strangers near unto himſelf, and Adopt Enemies and Rebels into his Family, Regiſter their Names in the Book of Life, make them Heirs of Glory, Co-heirs with Jeſus Chriſt his Eternal Son, as the *Apoſtle* admiringly recounts it, *Rom.* 8. 17. *This is both Mercy and Miracle together.*

Secondly, It ſhould teach us to walk worthy of this High and Honourable Relation into which we are taken, and to demean our ſelves as Children ought to do in all Holy

Holy Obedience to his Commands with Fear and Reverence to his Authority; and an Humble Submiſſion to his Will. This God Challengeth at our hands, as being our *Father*, Mal. 1. 6. *If I be a Father, where is mine Honour*, and 1 *Pet.* 1. 17. *If we call on the Father, paſs the time of your ſojourning here in fear.* And likewiſe by giving thee leave to Style him by this Name of *Father*, he puts thee in remembrance that thou ſhouldſt endeavour by a Holy Life and Converſation to be like thy *Father*, and ſo approve it to thine own Conſcience and to all others that thou art indeed a *Child*, a *Son* of God.

Thirdly, Is God thy *Father*? this then may give us abundance of aſſurance that we ſhall receive at his hands what we ask, if it be good for us; and if it be not, we have no reaſon to complain that we are not heard, unleſs he ſhould turn our Prayers into Curſes. And this very Conſideration ſeems to be the reaſon, why our Saviour chooſeth this among all God's Titles and Attributes to prefix before this Prayer: and indeed it is the moſt proper Name by which we can Style God in our Prayers unto him; for this Name of *Father* emboldens Faith, and is as a Pledge and Pawn before hand that our requeſts ſhall be heard and granted; and therefore our Saviour for the Confirmation of our Faith, argues very ſtrongly from this very Title of *Father*, Matth. 7. 9, 10, 11. *What Man is there of you, whom if his Son ask him for Bread, will he give him a Stone? or if he ask a Fiſh, will he give him a Serpent? If ye then being evil know how to give good things when your Children ask them, how much more ſhall my Father give good things to them that ask him?* Indeed it is a moſt encouraging *Argument*; for if the Bowels of an Earthly Parent, who yet many times is humorous, and whoſe tendereſt Mercies are but Cruelties in reſpect of God: If his Compaſſions will not ſuffer his Children to be defeated in their reaſonable and neceſſary requeſts; how much

much leſs will God, who is Love and Goodneſs it ſelf, and who hath inſpired all Parental Affections into other *Fathers*, ſuffer his *Children* to return aſhamed, when they beg of him thoſe things which are moſt agreeable to his Will and to their Wants? What doſt thou then, O Chriſtian, complaining of thy Wants, and ſighing under thy Burthens? Is not God thy *Father*? Go and boldly lay open thy Caſe unto him; his Bowels will certainly rowl and yern towards thee. Is it Spiritual Bleſſings thou wanteſt? ſpread thy requeſts before him; for as he is thy *Father*, ſo he is the God of all Grace, and will give unto thee of his fullneſs; for God loves that his Children ſhould be like him. Or is it Temporal Mercies thou wanteſt? why, he is thy *Father*, and he is the *Father of Mercies and the God of all Comfort*: And why ſhouldſt thou go ſo dejected and diſconſolate who haſt a *Father* ſo able and ſo willing to relieve and ſupply thee? only beware that thou askeſt not *Stones* for *Bread*, nor *Scorpions* for *Fiſh*, and then ask what thou wilt for thy good and thou ſhalt receive it.

Fourthly, Is God thy *Father? This then may encourage us againſt Deſpair under the ſenſe of our manifold ſins againſt God, and departures from him*: For he will certainly receive us upon our repentance and returning to him. This very apprehenſion was that which wrought upon the *Prodigal*, Luke 15. 8. *I will ariſe and go to my Father.* The Conſideration of our own guilt and vileneſs, without the Conſideration of God's infinite Mercy, tends only to widen the breach between him and us; for thoſe that are altogether hopeleſs, will ſin the more implacably and bitterly againſt God; like thoſe the *Prophet* mentions, *Jerem.* 2. 25. *That ſaid there was no hope, and therefore they would perſiſt in their wickedneſs.* But now to conſider that God is our *Father*, and that though we have caſt off the Duty and Obedience of *Children*, yet upon our Submiſſion he will bid us welcom, and inſtate us again in his Favour,

Favour, this to the ingenious Spirit of a Chriſtian, is a ſweet and powerful motive, to reduce him from his wandering and ſtraying, for it will work both upon his ſhame and upon his hope: Upon his ſhame, that ever he ſhould offend ſo Gracious a *Father*; and upon his hope, that thoſe offences ſhall be forgiven him through that very Mercy that he hath abuſed. Thus we read *Jerem.* 3. 4, 5. *Wilt thou not henceforth cry unto me, My Father, thou art the Guide of my youth? Will he reſerve his Anger for ever, will he keep it unto the end?* Noting that when we plead with God under the winning Name of *Father*, his Anger cannot long laſt, but his Bowels of Mercy will at laſt overcome the ſentiments of his Wrath and Juſtice. And thus much concerning the endearing Title of *Father*, which our Saviour directs us to uſe in our Prayers unto God.

Secondly, The next thing obſervable, is the Particle *Our*, *Our Father*, which notes to us, that God is not only the *Father* of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but he is the *Father* of all Men. He is the *Father* of all by Creation and Providence. And therefore we have the *Interrogation*, Mal. 2. 10. *Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God Created us?* But he is eſpecially the *Father* of the Faithful, by *Regeneration* and *Adoption*; *who are born not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Fleſh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God*, John 1. 13. This therefore ſhould teach us,

Firſt, *To eſteem one another as Brethren.* Outward reſpects, the Grandeur and Earthly Priviledges and Advantages of the World make no diſparity in God's Love to us, or in our Relation to him: And therefore howſoever thou mayeſt be advanced in Wealth or Honour, or parts above others; yet ſtill remember that they are thy *Brethren*, as they partake of the ſame common Nature, and much more if they partake of the ſame ſpecial Grace. Yea, Chriſt himſelf who is the Lord of all, *is not aſhamed to call them Brethren*, Heb. 2. 11. And ſhalt thou, who art but an

Adopted Son, no otherwiſe than the meaneſt Saint, be aſhamed of the Relation, eſpecially conſidering there is no Elderſhip, nor right of Firſt-born in the Family, for they are all Firſt-born, all Kings and Heirs with Chriſt Jeſus himſelf?

Secondly, *If thou art mean and low in the World, this ſhould teach thee to be well content with thy preſent State and Condition*, for God is thy *Father*, and a *Father* to thee equally with the greateſt. There is not the higheſt perſon upon Earth, but if he belong to God, prefers that Relation above all his other Titles: If he can write *Prince*, *King*, or *Emperour*, and can afterwards ſubjoin a *Child of God*, all his other Titles ſtand but for a Cypher with him. This, O Chriſtian, how mean, how deſpiſed ſoever thou art, this is thy Priviledge, and a Priviledge it is that equals thee with *David*, with *Solomon*, and with all the great ones of the Earth, that ever laid down their *Diadems* and *Scepters* at the feet of God. What ſays the *Apoſtle?* Gal. 3. 28. *There is neither bond nor free, but all are one in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Thirdly, Since when we Pray we muſt ſay, *Our Father*, this teacheth us, to intereſt one another in our Prayers. *Our Father* would not have us ſelfiſh ſo much as in our Prayers, but in the very entrance into them, we are put in mind of the Communion of Saints, to beg thoſe Bleſſings for all that belong to God which we ask for our ſelves; for as Chriſt hath made us all *Kings*, ſo he hath made all *Prieſts* to *God* and his *Father*: Now the Office of a *Prieſt* is Interceſſion: And therefore when we go to God, we ſhould bear upon our Breaſts the Name of our Brethren, and preſent them before God, through the *Interceſſion* and *Mediation* of Jeſus Chriſt our Great *High-Prieſt*, that both we and they may be accepted of God. And this we ought to do both in publick and private. It is true, in our ſecret Prayers we may pray particularly for our ſelves,

and

and we have frequent inſtances for it in *Scripture*; yet ought we in every Prayer that we make to God, to be mindful of the State and Condition of our Brethren. Yea, and it is very Lawful and Commendable, even in ſecret between God and our own Souls, in thoſe caſes that are common to us, with the reſt of God's Saints and People to joyn them in our Prayers; and although we are all alone, yet to ſay *Our Father*. For we find *Daniel* praying, *Dan.* 9. 17. *O Our God*, when yet he was in ſecret, *O Our God, hear the Prayer of thy Servant*. And this is to ſhew, that near and entire Communion which ought to be between all the Saints, praying with, and praying for all the Members of the Body of Jeſus Chriſt, and eſteeming their Intereſt as our own.

Fourthly, This ſhews us likewiſe the high Priviledge of the Children of God, that they have a Stock of Prayers going to Heaven for them from all their fellow Saints throughout the World; yea, from thoſe whom they never knew, whom they never heard of, yet are they continually appearing before the Throne of Grace on their behalf. And thou who wouldſt think it a great Favour if thou wert intereſted in the *Prayers* of ſome who are mighty in Prayer, and whom thou haſt begged to recommend thy Condition to God, mayeſt here have abundant Comfort in that thou art nearly concerned and intereſted in all the *Prayers* that are put up to God throughout the whole World, by all thoſe that are moſt prevalent at the Throne of Grace; yea, which is more, thou haſt an intereſt in all the *Prayers* that have ever been preferred to Heaven by all the Saints from the beginning of the World unto this very day: for not only this preſent *Church*, but the *Church* in all Ages is the Body of Chriſt, and every Member of it imitates the Pattern of Chriſt's Interceſſion, *John* 17. 20. *Neither Pray I for theſe alone, but for all theſe that ſhall believe in me.* The difference is, that Chriſt's Interceſſion was Authoritative, theirs only Charitative.

And thus much ſhall ſuffice to be ſpoken concerning God's Goodneſs and Mercy, expreſſed in thoſe Words, *Our Father.*

The next expreſſion ſets forth his Glory and Greatneſs, *Which art in Heaven.* But is not God every where preſent? Doth he not fill Heaven, and Earth, and all things? Yea, is it not ſaid, that *the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him*? How then are our *Prayers* to be directed to God in Heaven only, ſince he is as well on Earth as in Heaven? And were he only in Heaven, and not every where preſent on Earth, it would be in vain for us to *pray*, becauſe our *Prayers* could never reach his Ears, nor arrive to his notice.

I *Anſwer*, It is true, God is every where preſent, and all that we think, we think in him; and all that we ſpeak, we ſpeak unto him; he underſtands the ſilent motion of our Lips, when we whiſper a *Prayer* to him in our Cloſets; yea, the ſecret motions of our Hearts, when we only think a Prayer. Therefore when our Saviour bids us direct our *Prayers* to *our Father in Heaven*, this doth not imply that God is no where preſent, or that he no where hears Prayer, but only in Heaven: But this expreſſion is uſed,

Firſt, Becauſe Heaven is the moſt Glorious Place of God's reſidence, where he hath more eſpecially eſtabliſhed his *Throne of Grace*, and there ſits upon it. Now becauſe it is a moſt Glorious and Majeſtical thing to hear the Suits, and receive the Petitions that are tendred to him; therefore the *Scripture* aſcribes it to the moſt Glorious and Majeſtical Place, and that is to Heaven. And therefore we are commanded to pray to *our Father which is in Heaven*, to keep alive a due ſenſe of his Majeſty upon our Hearts. He would not have us think it a mean and trivial thing to have our *Prayers* heard; and therefore he repreſents himſelf to us arayed in all his Glory, and ſitting upon his Throne in the higheſt Heavens, willing to be thought a God never more

more Glorious, than when he is a God hearing Prayer.

Secondly, Our Prayers are directed to *our Father in Heaven*; becauſe though he hears them whereſoever they are uttered, yet he no where hears them with acceptance but only in Heaven; and the Reaſon is becauſe our *Prayers* are acceptable only as they are preſented before God through the Interceſſion of Chriſt: Now Chriſt performs his Mediatory Office only in Heaven; for he performs it in both Natures, as he is God and Man, and ſo he is only in Heaven. And therefore we are ſtill concerned to pray to *our Father in Heaven.* God indeed hears us upon Earth; for there is not a Word in our Tongue, but *behold, O Lord, thou knoweſt it altogether*; but this will not avail us, unleſs God hears our *Prayers* a ſecond time, as repeated over in the Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, and perfumed with the much Incenſe which he offers up with the Prayers of all the Saints. Since then we are directed to pray to *our Father which is in Heaven*: This,

Firſt, May inform us, that there is no circumſtance of time or place that can hinder us from praying; for Heaven is over thee, and open to thee, whereſoever thou art; there is no *Clime* ſo remote, which is not over-ſpread with that *Pavillion*; and thou art in all places equally near to Heaven, and God is in it, ſitting upon his Throne of Grace, to receive and anſwer thy Requeſts, whereſoever thou offereſt them up unto him. And therefore we find in the *Scripture* ſome praying in God's Houſe of Prayer, ſome making their Houſes Houſes of Prayer, St. *Peter* pray'd on the Houſe-top when he fell into his Trance, *Iſaac* in the open Fields, our Saviour on a Mountain, *Jonas* in a Whale's Belly, *Abraham*'s Servant in his Journey, and *Aſa* in the midſt of a tumultuous and bloody Battel; yea, whatſoever thou art doing thou mayeſt pray, ſo long as Heaven is over thee and God in it: Whatſoever Company thou art in, whatſoever Employment thou art about, thou mayeſt ſtill pray; for thy

thy Father that is in Heaven ſtill hears thee: He hears thy Thoughts and thy Deſires, when either they are too big, or when it is not expedient to articulate them into Words.

Indeed the Voice in Prayer is not always neceſſary; nay, ſometimes it is not convenient; yea, it is never neceſſary, but only upon three Accounts.

Firſt, As that which God requires ſhould be employed in his Service; for this was a great end why it was given us, that therewithr we might Bleſs and Praiſe God: *With the Tongue*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *we bleſs God, even the Father*, Jam. 3. 9. Or,

Secondly, When in Secret it may be a means to help to raiſe up our Affections, keeping it ſtill within the bounds of Decency and Privacy. Or,

Thirdly, In our joyning with others, it helps likewiſe to raiſe and quicken their Affections; otherwiſe, were it not for theſe three Reaſons, the Voice is no more neceſſary to make our Wants and Deſires known unto God, than it is to make them known to our own Hearts: For thy Father which is in Heaven, is not certainly excluded from any part of the Earth; he is with thee, and lays his Ear to thy very Heart, and hears the Voice of thy Thoughts when thy Tongue is ſilent: And thou mayeſt, whatſoever work or buſineſs thou art doing, dart up a Prayer and a winged Deſire unto him, which ſhall be as acceptable and effectual, as the more ſolemn performance of this Duty at ſtated times.

Secondly, Is thy Father in Heaven, thy *Prayers* then ſhould be made ſo as to pierce the Heavens where God is? But how can this be done, ſince the diſtance between Heaven and us is ſo infinite? This is not to be done by the intenſion of raiſing thy Voice, but by the intenſion of raiſing thy Zeal and Spirit; for Zeal and Affection is a ſtrong Bow that will ſhoot a Petition through Heaven it ſelf. Let all thy Petitions therefore be ardent, and carry Fire in them,

and

and this will cauſe them to aſcend to the Element of pure Celeſtial Fire, from whence thy Breaſt was at firſt inflamed. It is a moſt remarkable place, *Exod.* 14. 15. when the *Red Sea* was before the *Iſraelites*, and the *Ægyptians* purſuing them behind, and unpaſſable Mountains on each ſide, the People murmuring, and *Moſes* their Captain and Guide in an unextricable Streight, we read not of any Vocal Prayer that *Moſes* then put up; and yet God calls to him, *Why cryeſt thou unto me*; a *Prayer* it was, not ſo much as accented not ſo much as whiſpered; and yet ſo ſtrong and powerful that it pierced Heaven, and was louder in the Ears of God than the Voice of Thunder.

And thus much ſhall ſuffice to be ſpoken concerning the Preface of this Prayer, *Our Father which art in Heaven.*

Let us now proceed unto the Petitions themſelves; the firſt three of which relate unto God's Glory; the other to our Temporal and Spiritual Good.

Of thoſe which relate to God's Glory; the Firſt deſireth the advancement of this Glory it ſelf, *Hallowed be thy Name.*

The Second, The means of effecting it, *Thy Kingdom come.*

The Third, The manifeſtation of it, *Thy Will be done, in Earth as it is in Heaven.*

I begin with the *Firſt* of theſe, *Hallowed be thy Name.* In the Explication of which we ſhall enquire,

Firſt, What is to be underſtood by the *Name of God.*

Secondly, What it is to *Hallow this Name of God.*

Thirdly, What is contained in this Petition, and what we pray for when we ſay, *Hallowed be thy Name.*

Firſt, What is meant by the *Name of God*?

To this I Anſwer, That the Name of God is any perfection aſcribed to him whereby he hath been pleaſed to make himſelf known to the Sons of Men: For Names are given

given to this very intent, that they might declare what the thing is to which that *Name* doth belong. Thus when God had created *Adam*, and made him Lord of this viſible World, he cauſed the Beaſts of the Field, and the Fowls of the Air to paſs before him, as it were to do Homage to their new Sovereign, and to receive *Names* from him; which according to the plenitude and perfection of his knowledge, did then aptly ſerve to expreſs their ſeveral Natures, and were not only *Names* but Definitions too. So when mention is made in *Scripture* of the Name of God, it ſignifies ſome expreſſion of his infinite Eſſence, in which he is pleaſed graciouſly to condeſcend to the weakneſs of our capacity, and to ſpell out himſelf to us, ſometimes by one perfection, and ſometimes by another; ſince it is utterly impoſſible for us finite Creatures, to have a full and comprehenſive knowledge of that Being which is infinite; for ſo God is only known to himſelf; being as infinite to all others, ſo finite to his own Knowledge and Underſtanding: And therefore he hath diſplayed before us his *Name*, to give us ſome help and advantage to conceive ſomewhat of him, though his Nature and Eſſence are in themſelves incomprehenſible to us, and ſhall be ſo for ever, even in Heaven it ſelf. Now this *Name of God* may well be diſtinguiſhed into two ſorts, his *Titles*, and his *Attributes*.

Firſt, His *Titles* are his *Name*, and ſo he is in *Scripture* frequently called *Jehovah*, *God*, *Lord*, *Creator*, and the like; and moſt of theſe his *Titles* are relative, reſpecting us; ſo his Name of Creator denotes his infinite Power, giving Being to all things. *Lord* and *King* ſignifie his Dominion and Authority, in diſpoſing and governing all that he hath made. *Father*, ſignifies his Care and Goodneſs in providing for his Creatures. *Redeemer*, his Mercy and Grace in delivering them from Temporal Evils and Calamities, or eſpecially from Eternal Death and Deſtruction.

Now

Now theſe *relative Titles*, though they properly belong unto God, yet are they not abſolutely eſſential to him; but connote a reſpect unto the Creatures. And therefore, though before the Creation of the World, God was for ever the ſame infinitely Bleſſed Being that he now is, and by the Creation of it no acceſſion was made to his infinitely perfect Nature, (*for in him there is no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning; but he is yeſterday and to day and the ſame for ever*;) yet could he not be called by the Name of Creator, or Lord, or Redeemer, or Father, (unleſs in reſpect of his Eternal Son:) But all theſe Titles reſult from the Relations wherein we ſtand unto God, of Creatures, Subjects, and Children. Theſe Names therefore had their beginning, ſome in the beginning of time, and ſome ſince, and yet they do very properly ſignifie unto us that God who is without beginning or end.

Secondly, As his *Titles*, ſo his *Attributes* are his *Name*; and theſe are of two ſorts, either *incommunicable* or *communicable*.

Firſt, The *incommunicable Attributes of God*; and theſe are thoſe which are ſo proper to the *Divine Eſſence*, that there is ſcarce the leaſt foot-ſteps or reſemblance of them to be found in any of the Creatures; and ſuch are his *Eternity*, which denotes a duration as well without beginning as without end: For though there are ſome Creatures, whoſe Beings ſhall never have a period ſet to them, as *Angels* and *Men*; yet there is no Creature that never had no beginning of its exiſtence. And ſo *God's Infiniteneſs* and *Immenſity* filling all places and exceeding all; which was moſt excellently ſet forth in that moſt ſignificant, yet unintelligible *Paradox* of the *Heathen Philoſopher*, That God was a Circle, whoſe Centre was every where, but its Circumference no where: His *ſimplicity* alſo, excluding all Compoſition and Mixture, which no Creature doth; for take the moſt ſimple of them, as *Angels* and the *ſeparate Souls* of

Men, yet they are at leaſt compounded in their Eſſences, and Powers, and Acts; for the Power of Underſtanding is not the Soul, nor the Act of Underſtanding the Power; therefore in theſe there is one thing and another. But it is not ſo in God, but whatſoever is in God is God himſelf, being one moſt pure and ſimple Act. Hence follows his *immutability* and *unchangeableneſs*, there being nothing in God which was not from all Eternity. And in the ſame rank are his *Omnipotency* and *All-ſufficiency*, his *Omniſcience* and *Independency*, and the like, which are incommunicable Attributes, and cannot without Blaſphemy be aſcribed unto any of the Creatures.

Secondly, There are other Attributes of God that are *communicable*, and are ſo called becauſe they may in ſome Analogy and Reſemblance be found in the Creatures alſo; ſo to be Holy, Juſt, Merciful, True, Powerful, and the like, are the Names of God, and yet may be aſcribed to the Creatures. So in that moſt Triumphant Declaration of his Name to *Moſes*, *Exod.* 34. 5, 6, 7. we find that the moſt of the Letters that compoſe it may be found, in ſome degrees, even among Men, the Lord proclaimed his Name, *the Lord God Merciful and Gracious, Long-ſuffering, and Abundant in Goodneſs and Truth, forgiving Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion, and Sin.* Now this Name of God Merciful and Gracious, Long-ſuffering, and Abundant in Goodneſs, which he ſeems ſo much to delight and glory in, and which he adorns with ſuch fair flouriſhes, he himſelf would have us to own and intimate, *Luk.* 6. 36, *Be ye merciful as your Father is merciful.* To aſpire to a reſemblance with God in his incommunicable Attributes and Name, is a moſt horrid and blaſphemous Preſumption; a Pride that caſt the *Devils* from Heaven to Hell: But to aſpire to a reſemblance unto God in his communicable Name, is the tendency of Grace, and the effect of the Spirit of God, conforming us in ſome meaſure to his Purity, and making us partakers in this

this ſence of the *Divine Nature*. And therefore it is preſs'd upon us, *Levit.* 29. 2. *You ſhall be Holy, for I the Lord your God am Holy.* And, *Mat.* 5. 48. *Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.*

Now theſe *communicable Attributes* of God, though they may in ſome reſpects be found in the Creatures, yet then are they properly the Names of God, when they are applyed to him free from all thoſe Imperfections with which they are neceſſarily attended in the Creatures. Abſtract them from all Imperfections, and we may apply them to God as his Name. Now theſe Imperfections are of two ſorts, either Privative, or Negative. A Creature is then ſaid to be Privatively imperfect when he falls ſhort of what he ought to be: And ſo are the beſt of Men imperfect in this Life; Merciful they are, but ſtill retain a mixture of Cruelty; Patient they are, but ſtill they have Impatience mix'd with it; Holy they are, but yet not Spotleſs as the Law requires them to be: And therefore in aſcribing Holineſs, Mercy, and Patience unto God, we muſt be ſure to ſeparate from them all ſuch Imperfections as are found in us, through the mixture of the contrary Corruptions with thoſe Graces; otherwiſe they will be ſo far from being the Name of God, that they will prove Blaſphemous Derogatives from him; neither is this enough, but we muſt remove all Negative imperfections alſo. Now a Creature is ſaid to be Negatively imperfect, when though it hath all the perfections that is due unto it, or required from it; yet it hath not all perfection that is poſſible or imaginable. Thus the *Holy Angels*, and the *Spirits of juſt Men* in Heaven, although they are made perfect ſo as to exclude all Privative imperfection, their Holineſs and their Graces there being as perfect as they ſhould be, and as God requires from them; yet have they a Negative imperfection; that is, there is ſome perfection of thoſe Graces, and of that Holineſs further poſſible, which they have not, nor is it within the Sphere

of their Natures to attain unto; in which ſence it is ſaid, *Job* 4. 8. *He chargeth his Angels with Folly*; that is, not as if they wanted any Wiſdom or Righteouſneſs that was due unto their Natures; but they had not all that Wiſdom that was poſſible, and ſo were at leaſt Negatively imperfect.

In all perfections of the Creatures, whether *Angels* or *Men*, be they never ſo great or excellent, there are Three imperfections that will neceſſarily attend them.

Firſt, That they have them not *originally* from themſelves, but derivatively from another, who is the Author and Embelliſher of their Natures.

Secondly, That they have them not *unchangeably*, but may not only increaſe but decreaſe, yea or utterly loſe them.

Thirdly, That they have them not *infinitely*, but in a ſtinted and limited meaſure.

Now in all the communicable Attributes of the Divine Nature, remove from them theſe Three Negative Imperfections, and then apply them to God, and they become his proper Name. God is *Holy*, *Wiſe*, *Powerful*, *Juſt*, *Merciful*, *True*, &c. and ſo are likewiſe ſome of his moſt excellent Creatures, whom he hath made like unto himſelf; but then the difference between God and them conſiſts in this, That his Wiſdom and the reſt of his Attributes are originally from him, theirs derivatively from him; his infinite and boundleſs, theirs limited and ſtinted; his invariable and unchangeable, theirs ſubject to mutations and decays and total abolition. So that in theſe Three reſpects, even the *communicable* Attributes of God, are themſelves *incommunicable*; and ſo they are his Name, whereby he is known and differenced from all other Beings whatſoever.

But may it not be here ſaid to me, as it was to *Manoah*, *Judges* 13. 18. *Why askeſt thou after my Name, ſeeing it is ſecret and wonderful*? Indeed we can no more find

find out the Name of God to perfection, than we can his Nature and Eſſence; for both are infinite and unſearchable. And there are Two expreſſions in *Scripture*, that make this Knowledge impoſſible, the one of them quite contrary to the other: One is, *that God dwelleth in that light to which no Man can approach*, 1 Tim. 6. 16. *Scrutator Majeſtatis opprimetur à Gloriâ*: He that will too buſily pry into Majeſty, ſhall be oppreſſed and dazled with Glory. And the other is, *that he dwells in thick Darkneſs*, 2 Chron. 6. 1. both implying the ſame impoſſibility of *ſearching out the Almighty to perfection*, as *Job* ſpeaks, *ch.* 11. 7.

But though this comprehenſive Knowledge be impoſſible, yet God hath given us hints and traces of himſelf, by which we may diſcover enough for our Adoration, though not perhaps for our ſatisfaction. And there are Two ways, whereby God hath made known himſelf and his Name unto us, and they are by his Works, and by his Word.

Firſt, We may ſpell out God's Name by his Works; and to this end ſerve thoſe two great Capital Letters of *Heaven* and *Earth*, the *Air* and *Sea*; yea, there is no one Creature, how vile and contemptible ſoever it be, but it reads us Lectures of the Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs of the great Creator; in which ſence the *Apoſtle* tells us, *Rom.* 1. 20. *The inviſible things of him, from the Creation of the World, are clearly ſeen, by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and God-head.*

Secondly, More expreſly and diſtinctly by his Word, for the *Scriptures* are *Nomenclatura Dei*. By theſe we come to a more clear and evident Knowledge of theſe Attributes of God, which the Works of Nature held forth to us in a more obſcure and confuſed manner. And by this likewiſe we attain to the Knowledge of thoſe perfections of God which the Works of *Creation* and *Providence* could never have inſtructed us in; as of a *Trinity* in *Unity*, of the *Eternal Generation*, and *Temporal Incarnation* of the Son of God,

God, of the whole Myſtery of Religion, and the tenure of the Covenant of Grace, which are things that could never have been known but by Divine Revelation.

Indeed we may from the Works of God alone gather Knowledge enough of him to make us inexcuſable if we Worſhip him not as God, for ſo did the Heathens as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, in the forecited place, *Rom.* 1. 20. but it is only from the Word that we know ſo much of God as to make us Eternally Bleſſed and Happy. Here he hath diſplayed his Name, the Lord God, Gracious and Merciful, pardoning Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion, and Sin. Here alone hath he made known himſelf to be our *Father* in Jeſus Chriſt, and appointed the Spiritual Worſhip of himſelf, that might prepare us for the Eternal Enjoyment of him in Glory.

So that now we ſee what is meant by the Name of God, his Titles as *King*, *Lord*, *Creator*, *Father*, *Redeemer*, and the like. And his Attributes both Communicable as *Juſtice*, *Holineſs*, *Wiſdom*, *Mercy* and *Truth*, &c. and incommunicable as *Infinite*, *Eternal*, *Unchangeable*, *Omnipotent*, *Independent*, and ſuch like; and that both this Name, both of Titles and Attributes, are made known to us, either by the Works of God, or by his Word.

Let us in the next place, enquire what it is to Hallow this Name of God. To Hallow is nothing elſe but to Sanctifie or make Holy, ſo that *Hallowed be thy Name*, is no other than let thy Name be made Holy. But here may be a Queſtion,

How can Creatures be ſaid to make God Holy, whereas it is God that makes them Holy?

I anſwer, There is a Three-fold way of Hallowing or Sanctifying a thing or perſon. One by *Dedication*. A Second by *Infuſion*. And a Third by *Declaration*.

Firſt, A thing may be Hallowed or made Holy by *Dedication*, ſetting them a part for Holy Uſes and Services; ſo the

the First-borne are said to be Sanctified to the Lord, *Exod.* 13. 2. And that because among Men the First-born were to be Priests unto the Lord, and among Beasts they were to be Sacrificed. And thus *Aaron* and his Sons and the whole Tribe of *Levi*, whom God took in Exchange for the First-born, are said to be Consecrated and Sanctified, *Exod.* 28. 41. and many more instances might be given to the same purpose, were it needful. And thus at least we are said to be Sanctified by *Baptism*, *Ephes.* 5. 26. That is, we are by that Holy Ordinance set apart and Consecrated to the Service of God. Thus one Creature may Sanctifie and make another Holy; namely, by *Dedication* or *Separation* to some Sacred Use and Service: And so the Ministers of Christ do Sanctifie and Hallow the *Elements* in the *Holy Communion*, setting them apart from common and ordinary use to that Blessed Mystery.

Secondly, There is a Sanctification or Hallowing by *Infusion* or *Implanting* the real Principles and Habits of Holiness into that which is Hallowed. And thus God Sanctifies his *Elect*, by *Infusing* of his Grace into them, and making them Holy in some measure and similitude like himself. So our Saviour Prays, *John* 17. 17. *Sanctifie them through thy Truth, thy Word is Truth.* And the *Apostle*, 1 Thes. 5. 23. Prays, *The very God of Peace Sanctifie you wholly.* In neither of these Two Sences is God's Name to be Sanctified or Hallowed by us, for thus to Pray were to Blaspheme.

Thirdly, There is a Sanctifying by *Declaration*, when we acknowledge and reverence that as Holy that is indeed so.

And thus only it is that Creatures may Sanctifie the Name of God the Creator. So we have it used, *Isa.* 29. 23. *They shall Sanctifie my Name, and Sanctifie the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.* Now thus to Sanctifie the Name of God, is the very same with that other Expression that commonly occurs in *Scripture*, of Glorifying God. We can add nothing to his infinite Perfections, nor

nor to the Luſtre and Brightneſs of his Crown; yet then are we ſaid to Sanctifie and Glorifie God when in our moſt Reverend Thoughts we obſerve and admire his Holineſs, and the bright Coruſcations of his Attributes, and when we endeavour by all Holy ways to declare them unto others, that they may obſerve and admire them with us, and give unto God that Holy Veneration which is due unto him.

Thus we ſee what the Name of God is, and what it is to Sanctifie or Hallow this Name. *Thirdly*,

Let us now conſider what is contained in this Petition, *Hallowed be thy Name.* And here,

Firſt, In that Chriſt hath taught us to make this the firſt Petition in our Prayer to God, we may learn that the Glory of God is to be preferred by us before all other things whatſoever. And indeed that which God hath made the laſt and utmoſt of all his ends, and hath appointed to be the higheſt and utmoſt of ours, ſhould be the Firſt of all our Thoughts and Endeavours, and preferred before whatſoever elſe is deareſt unto us; yea, before our very Lives themſelves. This was our *Saviour's* Practice, *John* 12. 27, 28. *Father, ſave me from this hour; but for this cauſe came I unto this hour: Father, Glorifie thy Name.* As if he had ſaid, Though Life be naturally dear, and the Cup which I am to drink very bitter, and the Wrath that I am to undergo, heavy and infinite; yet all theſe things are not ſo conſiderable to me as thy Glory, and therefore though it be by *Agonies*, by *Death*, by the *Croſs*, yet, *Father, Glorifie thy Name.* The ſame mind ſhould dwell in us likewiſe, and we ſhould hereby be inſtructed to deſire and pray for other things with limitations and reſtrictions, but for the Glory of God abſolutely and ſimply. *Father, Glorifie thy Name*, and if in the Counſel of thy Will, and the courſe of thy Providence, it cannot be otherwiſe than by my Suffering or Sorrow; yea, or Death it ſelf; yet, *Father*, even

even in this Glorifie thy Name; and out of my very Ruins erect thou a *Trophy* and *Monument* to thy Praiſe: Be thou Hallowed and Sanctified although at my coſt, and with the loſs of all.

Secondly, In that this Petition is placed in the beginning of the *Lord's Prayer*, it intimates to us that in the very beginning and entrance of our Prayers, we ought to beg aſſiſtance from God, ſo to perform Holy Duties that God may be Glorified, and his Name Sanctified by us in it. It is a good and needful requeſt to beg of God the aid and help of his Spirit to enable us to Hallow his Name in the ſucceeding requeſts we are to make.

Thirdly, Obſerve that when we preſent this Petition before God, we beg Three things of him.

Firſt, Such Grace for our ſelves as may enable us to Sanctifie and Glorifie him.

Secondly, Graces likewiſe for others to enable them thereunto.

Thirdly, That God would by his Almighty Providence, direct and over-rule all things both good and evil, to the advancement of his own Glory.

Firſt, We beg of God that he would beſtow upon us ſuch Graces as are requiſite to Glorifie him in the World. We beg Knowledge and Underſtanding of him, of his Nature, of his Will, and of his Works; for we cannot Glorifie that God whom we are ignorant of. We beg likewiſe Patience and Contentment in all Eſtates, thankfulneſs for every Providence, Graces that do highly tend to the Promoting of God's Honour and Glory. We beg Faith likewiſe, whereby we give the higheſt and greateſt Glory to God that Mortal Men are able to aſcribe, for to truſt upon his Word, and to build upon his Promiſes, is to Honour his Truth and Faithfulneſs. And therefore we have that Expreſſion, *Rom.* 4. 20. *That Abraham was ſtrong in Faith, giving Glory to*

God. We beg also, that our Speech may be Savoury, and such as *may Minister Grace to the Hearers.* And lastly, a humble, blameless, and exemplary life, for by our good Works we are to Glorifie our *Heavenly Father.*

I cannot stand to insist upon these things particularly, because my design is only to give you briefly and summarily an account of what is contained in this most Excellent Prayer, that you may understand what you Pray for, when you present these Petitions before God.

Secondly, We herein beg of God, That he would so overrule all things whatsoever, that his Glory may be secured; nay, promoted by them; and therefore whatsoever falls out, we ought to say, *Hallowed be thy Name* by it. Hereby we Pray that the Gifts and Eminent Graces of God's Children may redound unto his Glory, that they may not be puffed up with them, nor ascribe the credit of them to themselves. That the Peace and Prosperity of the Church of Christ may turn to the Glory of God, that outward Mercies may not make them careless and forgetful of his Service and Honour. That the sins and failings of God's People, may eventually turn to the Glory of God, which seem directly to blot and stain it: And that by their Repentance and Confessions, they may give Glory to him whom they have offended, and Satisfaction to them whom they have scandalized, that all the Afflictions and Troubles of his People may in the end tend unto his Glory as well as their Good, by declaring his Power in supporting them, and his Goodness and Mercy in delivering them. That all the Devices and Conspiracies, the Rage and Fury of the Enemies of his *Church,* may, contrary to their intentions, be overswayed to advance his Honour, and that the Wrath of Man may praise him by shewing forth his Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, either in restraining or overturning it. And finally, that all Creatures both in Heaven and in Earth; yea, all the Works of God's Hands should Glorifie God in the several Stations in which he hath set them:

them: Some by being the Manifeſtations of his Attributes, and ſome the Manifeſters of them. Brutes and Senſeleſs Creatures paſſively declaring the Glory of their great Creator; and rational and intelligent Creatures ſhewing it forth actively, and all concurring in this great Work, for which all were made, even the Glory and Praiſe of God.

Thus we ſee what a large and copious requeſt we preſent before God, when we pray that his Name ſhould be *Hallowed*, which that it may be, let us our ſelves endeavour to be Holy, for it is impoſſible that an unholy Heart or Life ſhould Sanctifie a Holy God. Whilſt we perſevere in our wicked Converſations, we do but mock God and our ſelves, when we deſire to Sanctifie that Name of his, which we daily prophane and pollute; nay, indeed we do but Pray for our own Deſtruction, even that God would Sanctifie his Name, part whereof is his juſt and dreadful ſeverity upon all thoſe, and conſequently upon our ſelves, who defile and prophane it. And thus I have finiſhed the Firſt Petition, *Hallowed be thy Name.*

The Second Petition follows, *Thy Kingdom come.*

This now very aptly ſucceeds upon the former, becauſe this is the beſt way and means to *Hallow God's Name*, by enlarging his Kingdom, and bringing in many to ſubmit to his Scepter and Government. For *Praiſe waiteth for God in Sion*, Pſal. 65. 1. *And his Name is great in Iſrael*, Pſal. 76. 1.

Now here for our clearer proceeding, we muſt diſtinguiſh of God's Kingdom, and then ſhew you how this Kingdom comes. And laſtly, what we pray for in preſenting this Petition to God, *Thy Kingdom come.*

Firſt, We muſt diſtinguiſh of God's Kingdom. Now the Kingdom of God is Two-fold, either Univerſal, or more Particular and Peculiar: The one is his Kingdom of Power, the other is his Kingdom of Grace.

Firſt, His *Univerſal Kingdom*, which extends over all things in Heaven and Earth, yea and Hell it ſelf. And ſo he is the ſole *Monarh* of the whole World, and all the *Princes* and *Potentates* of the Earth, are but his *Vice-Roys* and *Vicegerents*, that Govern under and ſhould Govern for him: For he is that *Bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords*, as the *Apoſtle* Styles him, 1 *Tim.* 6. 15. and *his Kingdom ruleth over all*, Pſal. 103. 19. It is true, in this *Univerſal Kingdom* there are many Rebels that would not have him to Reign over them. Many that daily riſe up in Arms, break his Laws, defy his Juſtice, and reject his Mercy. Many, that were their Power equal to their Malice, would Dethrone and Depoſe him from his Sovereignty. Whole Legions of Infernal Spirits are continually muſtering up all their Forces, and drawing wretched ſinful Men into the Conſpiracy, and their quarrel is for no leſs than *Dominion* and *Empire*; who ſhall be King, God or Satan; yet all their attempts are but vain and fruſtrate, and in ſpite of all their impotent rage, God's Kingdom ſhall ſtand, and as it was from Everlaſting, ſo ſhall it be to Everlaſting, *for thine is the Kingdom and Power, for ever and ever*. And therefore the moſt wicked of all God's Creatures are ſtill his Subjects; not ſubject indeed to his Laws, for ſo they break his Bonds aſunder, and caſt away his Cords from them; but they are ſubject to his Power and Providence, and that in Three reſpects. As it grants *Permiſſion*. As it impoſeth *Reſtraints*. And as it inflicts *Puniſhments*.

Firſt, All are God's Subjects in that they can do nothing without his *Permiſſion*. Neither the *Devil* that Arch-Creature, nor the worſt of his Inſtruments, can ſo much as touch an hair of our Head, unleſs leave be granted them. Yea, we find that a whole *Legion* of *Devils* after they were diſpoſſeſſed of their uſurped abode, durſt not ſo much as houſe themſelves in a Herd of Swine, without firſt

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craving leave of our Saviour, *Mark* 5. 12. And all the Villainies and Out-rages that have ever been committed in the World, have had their paſs from God's Permiſſion, without which the Luſts of Men as furious and eager as they are, muſt needs have miſcarrying Wombs and dry Breaſts. Nor is it any taint at all to the pure Holineſs of God, that he doth thus permit the wickedneſs of Men, which if he pleaſed, he might prevent. For though we are obliged to keep others from ſin when it lies in our power to do it, yet no ſuch Obligation lies upon God, though he can keep the wickedſt Wretch on Earth from ever ſinning any more; yet he permits Wiſely for the greater advancement of his own Glory, and the Exerciſe of his Peoples Graces, and at the laſt he puniſhes Juſtly.

Secondly, His Kingdom is over all, in that he can *bend* in and reſtrain his Rebellious Subjects as he pleaſeth. Sometimes he doth it by cutting ſhort their Power of doing miſchief. He chains up thoſe Mad Men, and takes from them thoſe Swords, Arrows, and Fire-brands, which otherwiſe they might hurl abroad, both to their own and others hurt. Sometimes he raiſeth up an oppoſite Power againſt them that they cannot break through to the Commiſſion of their ſins: ſo the *Jews* would often have taken Chriſt and put him to Death, but they feared the People, whom his Miracles and Cures had obliged unto him. Sometimes Providence caſts in ſome ſeaſonable diverſion, and thus he overruled *Joſeph*'s *Brethren*, reſtraining them from killing him by the Providential paſſing by of *Merchants* that way. And ſometimes by removing the *Objects* againſt which they intended to ſin. So *Herod* intended to put *Peter* to death, but that very night, God ſent his *Angel* to work his eſcape, and prevented that wickedneſs. Many other ways there may be of his Exerciſing his Sovereignty and Dominion over his moſt Rebellious Creatures, who though they are Slaves to their Luſts, yet God holds their Chain in his

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own hand, ſlacking it by his permiſſion, and ſometimes ſtraitning it by his Powerful reſtraints. And therefore we find in *Scripture*, that God hath a certain meaſure for Mens ſins, beyond which they ſhall not exceed. *Zach.* 5. There is mention made of an *Ephah of Wickedneſs*. And this ſignifies to us, that though wicked Men break the bounds of his Laws, yet they cannot break the bounds of his Providence. God hath ſet them their meaſure which they can neither fill without his Permiſſion, nor exceed, becauſe of his reſtraint.

Thirdly, God declares his Kingdom to be over all, by inflicting deſerved puniſhments on the moſt ſtubborn and rebellious Sinners: though they tranſgreſs his Laws, and provoke his Holineſs, yet they ſhall never out-brave his Juſtice; but he will certainly humble them, if not to Repentance, yet to Hell and Perdition, *Luke* 19. 17. *Thoſe mine Enemies that would not that I ſhould Reign over them, bring them hither, and ſlay them before me.* And therefore we ſee how God hath erected *Trophies* and *Monuments* to the Praiſe of his dread Power and Servere Juſtice, out of the Ruins of the moſt Proud and Inſolent Sinners. *Pharaoh* who was both the great Type and Inſtrument of the *Devil*, how did God break that ſtubborn Wretch with Plague upon Plague, and one Miſery after another? For to this very purpoſe God ſet him up, that he might ſhew his Signs and Wonders upon him. And thus God deals with many others in this Life by ſome Signal and Remarkable Puniſhments, making them Examples to deter others from the like Crimes.

But thus he deals with all his Rebels in *Hell*, for even that is one, and a large part of his *Kingdom*: It is his Priſon wherein he hath ſhut up all his Malefactors whom his grim Serjeant, Death, hath Arreſted. It is the great Slaughter-houſe of Souls, and the Shop of Juſtice; *Devils* are there his Executioners, and Fire, and Rack and Torments the due Guerdon of thoſe impenitent Rebels, who ſhaking

off

off his Yoke, and casting of his Cords from them, are crush'd for ever under the insupportable load of his Wrath, and bound in Chains of massy Darkness, reserved for the Judgment of the Great Day.

Thus we see God's *Universal Kingdom* consists of Three great Provinces, *Heaven*, *Earth*, and *Hell*: In Heaven, only Grace and Mercy Reigns; on Earth, both Mercy and Justice, in the various dispensations of them towards the Sons of Men; in Hell, pure and unmixed Justice triumphs, in the Eternal Damnation of his Apostate Creatures: This is God's *Universal Kingdom*. But,

Secondly, Besides this, God hath a peculiar *Kingdom*, and that is his *Kingdom of Grace*, which though it be not so large and extensive as the former, yet is it far more excellent, and the Royalty of it is God's singular Delight. Now this *Kingdom of Grace* is his Church, and may be considered Two ways.

First, In its Growth and Progress.

Secondly, In its Perfection and Consummation.

In the former respect, it is the *Church Militant* here upon Earth; and in the latter, it is the *Church Triumphant* in Heaven, for both make up but one Kingdom under divers respects.

First, Let us a little consider God's Kingdom here upon Earth, or the *Church Militant*; and that is Two-fold, Visible and Invisible.

The *Visible Kingdom* of God upon Earth, are a company of People openly professing the Fundamentals of Religion, and those Truths necessary to Salvation, which God hath made known unto the World, and joyning together in the External Communion of Ordinances.

The *Invisible Kingdom*, are a company of true Believers, who have Internal and Invisible Communion with God by his Spirit and their Faith. The *Visible Church* is of a much larger extent than the *Invisible*; for it comprehends Hypocrite

crites and Formaliſts, and all thoſe who have given up their Names to Chriſt, and liſted themſelves under his Banner, and make an outward profeſſion of the Truth, although by their Lives and Practices they contradict and deny what they own and profeſs with their Lips: Theſe belong to the Kingdom of God's Grace, as to the External Diſpenſation and Regiment of it, becauſe they profeſs obedience to his Laws, and live under the means of Grace, by which many of them through the efficacious concurrence of the Spirit of God, are tranſlated into the *Inviſible Kingdom* of his dear Son.

Now this *Viſible Kingdom* of God upon Earth, is but an imperfect State and Condition; for though all that are Members of it are ſelected and taken out of the World, yet there is a great deal of Mixture and Droſs, and many things that do offend. For,

Firſt, There is in it a mixture of Wicked Perſons with thoſe that are really Holy. Many are of this Kingdom only, becauſe their Conſciences are convinced of the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, although their Lives are not ſubject to the Power of it; and theſe are taken out of the World only as they are brought into the Pale of the Church, and profeſs the Name of Chriſt and his *Religion*, as diſtinct from all other *Religions* in the World. And therefore we find the Church, or the Kingdom of Heaven, in *Scripture*, frequently compared to a *Net* caſt into the *Sea*, gathering every kind of *Fiſh*, both good and bad, *Matth.* 13. 47. both ſorts are embraced in the Boſom of this Net, and no perfect Separation can be made, until it be drawn to ſhore, at the Day of Judgment; and then the Good will be gathered into Veſſels, and the Bad caſt away, as it is there expreſſed. Again, it is compared to a *Floor*, wherein is both *Chaff* and *Wheat*, *Luk.* 3. 17. and theſe will be mix'd together until the laſt diſcriminating Day, and *then ſhall the Wheat be gathered into the Garner, and the Chaff burnt up with unquenchable Fire.* Again, it is compared to a *Field*, wherein

wherein there grows *Tares* as well as *Corn*, *Matth.* 13. 24. which muſt grow together until the *Harveſt*, and then ſhall the *Tares* be bound in Bundles to be burnt, and the profitable *Grain* be gathered into the *Barn*. This hath ſtill been and will be the mix'd condition of God's Church on Earth, wherein, through Hypocriſie and groſs Diſſimilation, many that are Enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt, will yet go under that Cogniſance, and keep up a Form of Godlineſs, though they deny and hate the Power of it.

Secondly, There is even in the *Inviſible Church* here on Earth a great mixture too; thoſe who have a real and vital Union to Chriſt, and maintain a Spiritual Communion with him; yet even they have a ſad mixture of Evil with all their Good, of Sin with all their Grace and Holineſs; ſo that the *Church* is ſtill imperfect, not only from a mixture of Perſons, but from a mixture in Perſons: As we know but in part, ſo we love but in part; we fear, we obey God but in part. And with our Profeſſion of Faith we had need alſo to preſer that humble Petition, *Mark* 9. 24. *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.*

Secondly, The Kingdom of God may be conſidered in its Perfection and Conſummation, and ſo it is Triumphant in Heaven. And this conſiſts of ſuch Glorious *Angels* as never Fell, and of ſuch *Glorified Saints* who are raiſed from their Fall, and reſtored to a far better Condition than what they loſt. This is the moſt Glorious part of God's Kingdom; here is his Throne eſpecially eſtabliſhed, and here it is that he diſplays himſelf in the ſplendor of his Majeſty; being ſurrounded by innumerable Hoſts of Holy Angels, and the Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect, who continually Worſhip before him, with a moſt proſtrate Veneration, and give *Honour, and Glory, and Praiſe to him that ſits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.*

Now this *Kingdom* is altogether free from thoſe former Imperfections and Mixtures. There is no mixture of good

and bad together, neither is there any mixture of bad in the good; but all are Holy, and all as compleatly Holy as Creatures can be; for *into the New Jeruſalem ſhall no unclean thing ever enter.* There are neither Temptations to try us, nor Sins to defile us, nor Sorrows to afflict us; but perfect Joy and perfect Purity: Where all Tears ſhall be wiped from our Eyes, and all Sin, the Cauſe of thoſe Tears, rooted out of our Hearts. And yet if Heaven it ſelf may be liable to any Defects, or capable of any Additions, there ſeems at preſent to be wanting in it theſe Two things.

Firſt, The *Kingdom of Glory* is not yet Full, nor ſhall it be till the whole Number of the *Elect* ſhall be called, and the whole Number of the Called, Glorified. Many as yet are conflicting here below, and fitting themſelves for their Eternal Reward; many yet lie ſleeping in their Cauſes unborn, whom God hath *Foreknown* and *Predeſtinated* unto Eternal Life, all of whom he will in his due time bring unto the Poſſeſſion of his Heavenly Kingdom, to compleat the Number of his Glorious Subjects. And therefore it is ſaid, concerning the Saints that are already in Heaven, that *white Robes were given to every one of them*, and it was ſaid unto them, that *they ſhould reſt yet for a little ſeaſon, until their Fellow-Servants alſo and their Brethren, that ſhould be killed as they were, ſhould be fulfilled*, Rev. 6. 11.

Secondly, Thoſe Glorified Saints that are now in Heaven, though their Joys be perfect, yet their Perſons are not; but one part of them, their Bodies, continue ſtill under the arreſt of Death and the Power of the Grave; but yet they ſleep in Hope, and through that *Myſtical Union*, that there is between Jeſus Chriſt and every ſcattered Duſt of a Believer, they ſhall obtain a Glorious and Joyful Reſurrection; and then ſhall this Heavenly Kingdom be every way perfect; perfect in the full Number of its Subjects, and every Subject perfect in his entire and compleat Reward; his Soul made for ever Bleſſed in the *Beatifical Viſion* of God, and his Body

Body made unconceivably Glorious by the redundancy of that Glory that fills his Soul, and both ſhall remain for ever with the Lord.

And thus you ſee what the *Kingdom of God* is, both *univerſal* and *peculiar*, the *Kingdom* of his *Power*, and the *Kingdom* of his *Grace*, and that as it is *Militant* here on Earth, both *Viſible* and *Inviſible*, and as it is *Triumphant* in Heaven.

The next thing in order is, to ſhew how this *Kingdom* of *God* is ſaid to come. This Word, *come*, implies that we pray for a *Kingdom* that is yet in its Progreſs, and hath not yet attained the higheſt pitch of that perfection which is expected and deſired; for that which is yet to come, is not as yet arrived to that State in which it is to be: And therefore we do not ſo properly pray that the *Univerſal Kingdom* of *God* ſhould come; for his Dominion over the Creatures is actually the ſame, and ſhall be ſo for ever: But more eſpecially we pray that the *peculiar Kingdom* of *God* ſhould cóme, and that as to both parts of it, *Militant* and *Triumphant*. Now this *peculiar Kingdom* is ſaid to come in Three reſpects.

Firſt, In reſpect of the means of Grace and Salvation; for where theſe are rightly diſpenſed, (I mean the Holy Word and Sacraments,) there is the Kingdom of God begun and erected; and therefore we find it called *the Word of the Kingdom*, Matth. 13. 19.

Secondly, In reſpect of the Efficacy of thoſe means, when all ready and cordial Obedience is yielded to the Laws of God, then doth this *Kingdom come*, and the Glory of it is advanced and increaſed.

Thirdly, In reſpect of Perfection, and ſo it comes when the Graces of the Saints are ſtrengthned and increaſed; when the Souls of the Godly departing this Life are received into Heaven; and when the whole Number of them ſhall have their perfect Conſummation and Bliſs in the Glorification

both of Soul and Body, after the General Re-ſurrection. And thus we have ſeen how the *Kingdom* of *God* may *come*.

In the next place we muſt enquire, what it is we pray for when we ſay *Thy Kingdom come*.

I Anſwer, There are various Things lie couch'd under this Petition; as,

Firſt, We pray that God would be pleaſed to Plant his Church, where it is not, according to his Promiſe, *giving all the Nations of the World to his Son for his Inheritance, and the utmoſt parts of the Earth for his Poſſeſſion.* That the dark Places and Corners of the Earth, that are yet the Habitations of Cruelty, may be illuſtrated with the Glorious Light of the Goſpel ſhining into them. That God would reveal his Son to thoſe poor wretched People, that ſit in Darkneſs and in the *Region* of the *Shadow* of *Death*, and would reſcue them from their Blind Superſtitions and Idolatries, and from the Power of the *Devil*, who ſtrongly works in the Children of Diſobedience, and would tranſlate them into the Kingdom of his dear Son; eſpecially, that he would remove the Veil from the Heart of the *Jew*, upon whom a ſad Judicial Hardneſs hath long lain, that they at length may be brought into the Unity and Fulneſs of Chriſt's Body: We pray that all the World, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, may be gathered into one Sheep-fold, under Chriſt Jeſus the great Paſtor and Shepherd of Souls; ſo that as God is one, ſo his Name and Service may be one throughout all the Earth. And thus we pray that Chriſt's *Kingdom may come*, in reſpect of the means of Grace and Salvation.

Secondly, This Petition, *Thy Kingdom come*, intimates our earneſt deſire that the Church of Chriſt, where they are planted, may be increaſed in the Members of the Faithful. That thoſe, who are as yet Enemies to the Name and Profeſſion of Chriſt, may be brought into the Viſible Church; and that thoſe in it, who are yet Strangers to a powerful Work

Work of Grace, may by the effectual Operation of the *Holy Ghoſt* be brought in to be Members of the *Inviſible Church*. And thus we pray that God's *Kingdom may come*, in reſpect of the Efficacy of the means of Grace.

Thirdly, We pray that all the Church of Chriſt throughout the World may be kept from ruine, that they may not be over-run with Superſtition or Idolatry: That God would not, in his Wrath remove his Candleſtick from them, as he hath in his Righteous Judgment done from other Churches, which were once Glorious and Splendid: We pray likewiſe, that God would make up all Breaches, and compoſe all Differences, and ſilence all Controverſies, and cut off all thoſe who trouble the Peace, and rend the Unity of the Church, breaking it into Factions and Schiſms, which are the moſt fatal Symptoms and Portenders of God's withdrawing himſelf, and carrying away his Goſpel, and giving of it to another People, who will better bring forth the Fruits of it, which are Peace, Meekneſs, and Love. And if in any thing Chriſtians be diverſly minded, that God would be pleaſed to reveal it unto them; and that *whereunto they have attained, they may walk by the ſame Rule, and mind the ſame Things*. And thus we pray that *Chriſt's Kingdom may come* in reſpect of its perfection and entireneſs.

Fourthly, It intimates our humble Requeſts to God, that his Ordinances may be purely and powerfully diſpenſed. Hence, as I noted before, the Word is called the *Word of the Kingdom*, Matth. 13. 19. that is the Word whereby we are brought into the Kingdom of Chriſt here on Earth, and fitted for his Triumphant Kingdom in Heaven. It is the means of our New Birth, the Seed of our Spiritual Life. And as a Kingdom cannot be well eſtabliſhed or governed without good Laws; ſo for the Government of his Kingdom, Chriſt hath eſtabliſhed Laws, which are contained in the Records of the *Holy Scriptures*. And as his Word is the Law, ſo his Sacraments are the Seals of his Kingdom; for

to

ſo every believing Partaker God doth under his Seal confirm the grant of Heaven and Eternal Salvation.

And therefore in this *Petition* we pray alſo, that God would give his Church able Miniſters of the New Teſtament, that may know how rightly to divide the Word of Truth, and to give every one his Portion in due ſeaſon.

And that he would be pleaſed to accompany the outward Adminiſtration of his Ordinances with the inward Operations of his Spirit, which alone can make them effectual to turn Men from Darkneſs to Light, and to bring them from the Power of Satan unto God. That the whole Number of God's Elect may in his due time be brought in by the means which he hath appointed and ſanctified for their Converſion and Salvation.

Theſe are the chief and principal things that we beg of God for the *Church Militant*, when we ſay, *Thy Kingdom come*, *viz.* that it may attain a perfection of Extent, and be planted where it is not to a perfection of Number; and may gain more Proſelytes and Converts, where it is planted to a perfection of Eſtabliſhment, that they may not be rooted out by the Violence of Men, nor abandoned through the Judgment of God. And to a perfection of Purity and Holineſs by the powerful Diſpenſation of Goſpel-Ordinances attended by the Efficacious Concurrence of the *Holy Spirit*. But,

Secondly, This *Petition* likewiſe reſpects the *Church Triumphant* in Heaven: Nor is this praying for the Dead a thing juſtly condemned of Superſtition and Folly; for we pray not for them to alter their State, which is impious and ridiculous, and a Foppiſh Conſequent upon the Figment of *Purgatory*: But we pray for the *Church Triumphant* only in general, that thoſe things which are as yet defective in it may be ſupplied; for certainly whereſoever there is any kind of imperfection we have ground to pray for the removal

moval of it; eſpecially when God hath encouraged us to it by promiſe that he will remove it: And therefore,

Firſt, We may well pray that the whole Body Myſtical of Jeſus Chriſt, and every Member of it, may be brought to the full Fruition of Heaven and Happineſs, that daily more may be admitted into the Heavenly Fellowſhip, till their Numbers as well as their Joys be Conſummate. And,

Secondly, We may pray that the Bodies of all the Saints that have ſlept in their Beds of Earth from the beginning of the World, may be raiſed again out of the Duſt, and united to their Souls, and for ever made Glorious in the Kingdom of Heaven; for both theſe things are abſolutely promiſed, the one *Rom.* 8. 29, 30. that thoſe whom God hath *Called* and *Juſtified* he will likewiſe *Glorifie*. And the other is, 1 *Theſſal.* 4. 16. *The Dead in Chriſt ſhall ariſe*. And certainly whatſoever may be the Object of our Faith, Hope may be the Subject of our Prayers. And this every true Chriſtian longs and breaths after, that theſe Days of Sin and Miſery may be ſhortned, that Chriſt would come in his Glory, that his Mediatory Kingdom being fulfilled, it might be delivered up unto the Father, and that we all might be one as the Father is in him, and he in the Father. *Even ſo come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly.* And thus I have finiſhed the Second Petition, *The Kingdom come.*

The Third follows, *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.* This now follows upon the former in a moſt rational and admirable method; for as before we pray that the *Kingdom of God might come*, as the beſt adapted means to *Hallow his Name*; ſo now we pray that his Will may be done by us, as the cleareſt Declaration that we are the Subjects of his Kingdom. Now here are conſiderable,

Firſt, The Petition it ſelf, *Thy Will be done in Earth:*

Secondly,

Secondly, The Meaſure and Proportion of it, *as it is in Heaven.*

I ſhall begin with the *Petition*, in which every Word carries great Weight and Moment; and therefore in the explication of it I ſhall ſhew you,

Firſt, What this Will of God is.

Secondly, How his Will may be ſaid to be done.

Thirdly, What force this Particle *thy*, *thy Will*, carries in it, and what it denotes.

Fourthly, What is meant by God's Will being done in Earth. And all theſe with all perſpicuity and brevity.

Firſt, What this Will of God is. Now the Will of God is commonly and very well diſtinguiſhed, into the Will of his Purpoſe, and into the Will of his Precept; his Decrees or his Commands. The former reſpects what ſhall be done by him; the latter what ought to be done by us: Both theſe, in *Scripture*, are frequently called the Will of God.

Firſt, God's Purpoſe is his Will; yea, it is more properly his Will than his Precepts are; for by this God doth abſolutely determine, what ſhall be, and what ſhall not be; and all things in the World take their Place and are ranged in their ſeveral Stations; and the whole ſeries of Cauſes and Effects are governed by the Ordination and Appointment of this his Sovereign Will. And therefore it is ſaid, *Eph.* 1. 11. that *God worketh all things according to the Counſel of his own Will.* And *Pſal.* 135. 6. *Whatſoever the Lord pleaſed that did he in Heaven, in Earth, in the Sea, and in all deep Places.* This is God's Will of Purpoſe, whereby he guides and governs all Events whatſoever; ſo that there is not the moſt inconſiderable Occurrence that happens, not the leaſt flight of a *Sparrow*, nor the falling off of an *Hair*, nor the motion of an *Atome* in the Air, or a *duſt*, or a *ſand* on the Earth,

Earth, but as it is effected by his Power and Providence, ſo it was determined by his Will and Counſel.

Secondly, The Precepts and Commands are likewiſe the Will of God; but they are improperly ſo called; becauſe theſe concern not, neither do they determine the Event of things, but only our Duty; not what ſhall be, but what ought to be; and it is called, *Rom.* 12. 2. *The good and acceptable and perfect Will of God.* This is all contained in the *Holy Scriptures*, which are a perfect Syſteme of Precepts given us for the Government of our Lives here, and for the attaining of Eternal Life hereafter; and therefore it is likewiſe called his Revealed Will; whereas the other, namely the Will of Purpoſe, is God's Secret Will, until it be manifeſted unto us by the Events and Effects of it.

Now concerning this diſtinction of God's Will of Purpoſe and Precept, we may note that though there be a great deal of difference, yet there is no contrariety or oppoſition between them.

Firſt, They differ the one from the other, not in reſpect of God, (for his Will is one infinitely pure and uncompounded Act,) but only in reſpect of the *Object*; for there are many things which God wills by his Will of Purpoſe, which he hath not willed by his Will of Precept. His Precepts are all holy, and command nothing but what is holy and acceptable: *This is the Will of God*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *even your Sanctification*, 1 *Theſſal.* 4. 3. It is the higheſt degree of Blaſphemy to impute unto God, that he hath commanded us any thing but what is Holy, Juſt, and Good: This were to make him the Author of Sin, who hath declared himſelf the Puniſher of it. But his *Will* of *Purpoſe* is not reſtrained within bounds and Limits; but extendeth it ſelf to all Events whatſoever, whether Good or Evil.

And as Evils are of two ſorts, either the Evil of Puniſhment, or the Evil of Sin; ſo is God's *Will* of *Purpoſe* two-

ſold, *effective* of the one, and *permiſſive* of the other; but in both moſt certain and infallible.

1. God's *Will* of *Purpoſe* doth effect and bring to paſs the Evil of Puniſhment: *Amos* 3. 6. *Shall there be any Evil in the City and the Lord hath not done it?* For he doth both in Heaven and in Earth whatſoever pleaſeth him. Were it not the Will of God, the World had never groaned under ſo many Miſeries and Calamities as have in all Ages befallen it. Now God never enjoyns us this as our Duty, although he lays them upon us as our Burden.

2. God's *Will* of *Purpoſe* permits the Evil of Sin for Wiſe and Gracious Ends, that he may bring good out of Evil; even thoſe very Sins and Wickedneſs which his *Will* of *Precept* forbids, his *Will* of *Purpoſe* permits; for if God did not will to permit them, there would be no ſuch thing as Sin in the World.

Secondly, Hence ariſeth another very remarkable difference, that we may effectually reſiſt God's Will of Precept, ſo as to hinder the accompliſhment of it; but whatſoever we do ſo it is our Sin, and will without repentance be our condemnation. So *Stephen* accuſeth the *Jews*, Act. 7. 51. *You do always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt*: that is, by your Practices you do always go contrary to the Commands of God, revealed by his Spirit in his Word. And were it not for this reſiſting of the Will of God, we ſhould be perfectly holy and blameleſs.

But we cannot reſiſt the *Will* of *God's Purpoſe*, ſo as to hinder the Execution of it; although ſometimes to endeavour it, may be ſo far from Sin, as to be our neceſſary and indiſpenſible Duty: For though it may be the Will of God to bring us into Poverty or into Priſon, or to lay ſore Diſeaſes upon us; yet it is not only lawful for us, but we are obliged as far as lies in us, to hinder theſe Evils of Puniſhment from befalling us, and to preſerve our Eſtates, our Liberty, our Health, and all our outward Comforts, by all lawful and allowed

allowed ways and means: Much more, if God ſhould will to permit a Sin in others, or in our ſelves, are we bound to hinder the Commiſſion of it; for, for us to be willing to permit, becauſe God is, though it be a conformity of our Wills to God's *Will* of *Purpoſe*, yet this is not our Rule to walk by: And it is a wretched Rebellion againſt his *Will* of *Precept*, which alone we are to reſpect in all our Actions, and endeavour to conform our ſelves unto. Doubtleſs it was God's *Will* of *Purpoſe*, that Chriſt the Lord of Life and Glory ſhould be Crucified; but yet the *Jews* conforming themſelves according to this Will, were guilty of the moſt horrid Wickedneſs that ever was committed in the World; for both theſe we have confirmed to us, *Acts* 2. 23. *Him being delivered by the determinate Counſel and Fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by Wicked Hands have crucified and ſlain.* Although it was by the determinate Counſel and Will of God, that Chriſt ſhould be taken and ſlain; yet nevertheleſs they were wicked Hands that were imbrued in that precious and inеſtimable Blood. And thus I have ſhown how the *Will* of God's *Purpoſe* and *Precept* do differ. But yet,

Secondly, Although there be this great difference, yet is there no contrariety or repugnancy, but a perfect Harmony and Uniformity between them. Some have thought that if God wills ſuch a thing ſhould be done; as for inſtance, the Crucifying of our Lord and Saviour by his *Will* of *Purpoſe*, and yet Wills that it ſhould not be done by his *Will* of *Precept*, that theſe two Wills muſt needs contradict one another; and this Argument ſome do make no ſmall uſe of to explode the diſtinction of the Will of God.

But the *Solution* is moſt eaſie; for when Wills are contrary to each other, there muſt be a Willing and a Nilling of the ſame thing; but it is not ſo here; for the Object of God's *Will* of *Purpoſe* is Event; but of his *Will* of *Precept*,

Duty. Now it is far enough from having any ſhadow of a contradiction for God to will or permit that to be which he hath willed or commanded us not to do. Indeed to will ſuch an Event to be and not to be, that ſuch a thing ſhall be my Duty and ſhall not be my Duty, are contradictions, and not to be imputed unto God. But to will that ſuch a thing ſhall eventually be, and yet to will that it ſhall be my Duty to endeavour to hinder it, is ſo far from being a contradiction, that it is moſt apparent and evident, and falls out moſt frequently in our ordinary converſe in the World. So in the forementioned famous inſtance of the Death of Chriſt. God willed by his *Will* of *Purpoſe* that it ſhould ſo come to paſs in all the circumſtances of it as it was perpetrated: but then he willed by his *Will* of *Precept*, that it ſhould be their Duty not to do it. Now certainly there is no contradiction or abſurdity that Duty and Event may be quite contrary one to the other: unleſs we could take away all Sin, and Authorize all the greateſt Villainies that ever were committed under the Sun. And thus much for the firſt Head.

And having thus ſeen what the Will of God is. The next General is to enquire, what Will it is we pray may be done, when we ſay, *Thy Will be done.* And here,

Firſt, It is clear that we eſpecially and abſolutely pray that the *Will* of God's *Precept* may be done, and that not only by us, but by all Men: For this Will of God is the Rule of our Obedience, and according to it we ought to conform all our Actions. And becauſe we are not ſufficient of our ſelves ſo much as to think any thing of our ſelves, much leſs to perform all thoſe various and weighty Duties of Holineſs, which God hath enjoyn'd us in his Word, therefore our Saviour hath taught us to beg of God Grace and Aſſiſtance to enable us to fullfil his Will, giving us not only Commands of Obedience, but Promiſes for our Relief and Encouragment inſtructing us in the Word, to crave ſupplies of

Grace

Grace from him who hath required Duty from us. And indeed there is a great deal of Reaſon we ſhould pray that his Will of *Precept* ſhould be done on Earth, if we conſider,

Firſt, The great Reluctancy and Oppoſition of Corrupt Nature againſt it. *The Law is Spiritual, but we are Carnal and ſold under ſin*, Rom. 7. 4. and in the beſt of Men there is a *Law in their Members, warring againſt the Law of their Minds*, that when they would do good, evil is preſent with them; and therefore we have need to pray, That God would encline our hearts to his Commandments, and then ſtrengthen us to obey them: That as our Will to good is the effect of his Grace, ſo the effect of our Wills may be the performance of his Will.

Secondly, God's Glory is deeply concern'd in the doing of his Will. For it is the Glory of a King to have his Laws obey'd. And ſo is it God's. When we profeſs our ſelves to be his Subjects, and pray that his *Kingdom may come*, it is but fit and rational, that we ſhould pray likewiſe, *Thy Will be done*, without which this his Kingdom of Grace would be but meerly Titular: For his Word is the Scepter and Law of his Kingdom, and if we yield not Obedience to it, we do tacitly condemn it and the Law-maker alſo of Injuſtice, and thereby reflect a moſt intolerable diſparagement upon God, preferring the will of Satan, and of our own Luſts, before his moſt Holy and Righteous Will. But when we endeavour to yield Obedience to his Commands, and pray that we may be able to do it with more diligence and conſtancy: this as it pleaſeth, ſo it glorifieth God, for by ſo doing, we acknowledge both his Sovereignty and his Equity; his Sovereignty, in that he may require of us what he pleaſeth; and his Equity, in that he requireth of us nothing but what is moſt juſt and fit: And therefore our *Saviour* tells us, *John* 15. 8. *Herein is my Father Glorified, that you bring forth much Fruit.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Our own Intereſt is deeply concerned in it: For through Obedience and doing the Will of God, it is, that we come to Inherit the Promiſes, *Revel.* 22. 14. *Bleſſed are they that do his Commandments that they may have a Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the City.* And therefore to pray, that God's Will may be done by us, is but to pray, that we our ſelves may be fitted and prepared for Eternal Life and Glory, unto which we can no otherwiſe attain, but by Holineſs and Obedience. O think but to what an Excellency doth Grace advance the Soul even in this Life; and makes *Chriſtians* as much above other Men, as other Men are above Beaſts. That when they are employed about the foul and naſty Offices of ſin; hurried by their vile Paſſions unto vile and baſe Actions, raking in the Mire and Filth of all manner of uncleanneſs, and defiling their Soul with thoſe Sins which will hereafter Damn them: Thy work ſhould be all Spiritual, conſiſting of the ſame pure Employments that the Holy *Angels* and *Glorified Saints* in Heaven ſpend their Eternity in. Conſider what an high Honour and Priviledge it is that you ſhould be admitted to attend immediately upon the Service of the *King* of *kings*. You are called to wait about his Throne, his Throne of Grace, to which you have always free acceſs to converſe and commune with God, by maintaining Fellowſhip with him in the performance of Holy Duties; which is a Dignity ſo high, that Humane Nature is capable but of one preferment more, and that is of being removed from one Throne to the other; from attending on the Throne of Grace to attend on the Throne of Glory. And then think, O Soul, if it be poſſible to think, what *neither Eye hath ſeen, nor Ear hath heard, neither hath it, nor can it enter into the heart of Man to conceive.* Think how tranſcendently Bleſſed thy Eſtate ſhall be, when the Will of thy God which was here thy Duty, ſhall there be thy Nature: When thy Obligation to do it ſhall be turned into

into a happy neceſſity of doing it. When all thy Thoughts and Affections ſhall be center'd in God for ever, and not the leaſt motion of thy Soul ſhall ſo much as twinkle or waver from the Eternal Contemplation and Fruition of the Infinite Deity. And therefore this our Eternal Happineſs being wrapt up in doing the Will of God, it highly concerns us to pray, That it may be done, and to endeavour to do it on Earth, ſo as that at length we may attain to the perfection of doing it in Heaven. And this is the *Firſt* thing that in this *Petition* we eſpecially and abſolutely pray for, *viz.* That God's *Will* of *Precept* may be done by us on Earth.

Secondly, It is more doubtful, whether we are ſimply to pray that God's *Will* of *Purpoſe* ſhould be done. And that,

Firſt, Becauſe the *Will* of *God's Purpoſe* is ſecret and unknown, and therefore cannot ſo immediately concern us in point of Duty, *For ſecret things belong to God, but revealed things belong to us and to our Children*, Deut. 29. 29.

Secondly, Becauſe this Will of God ſhall within the periods ſet by his Eternal Decrees, have its moſt perfect and full accompliſhment. For though his *Revealed Will* may be reſiſted and hindered, yet neither *Men* nor *Devils* can hinder his *ſecret Will* and the Purpoſes of his Counſels, theſe ſhall take place mauger all their ſpite and oppoſitions; and therefore it ſeems not altogether ſo proper matter for our Prayers.

Again, *Thirdly*, Many things come to paſs by the *Will* of *God's Purpoſe*, which we ought not to pray for; yea, which we ought to pray againſt: As not to inſtance in *God's Will* of permitting the ſins and wickedneſſes of Men, which beyond all exceptions, we ought to deprecate. Let us but conſider, common Charity obligeth us not to pray for any evil of Suffering to befal either our ſelves or others: and yet we know that it is often-times the *Will* of *God's Purpoſe* to

to bring great and ſore Judgments upon Kingdoms, and upon Families and Perſons: And if we may indefinitely pray that this Will ſhould be done, this would be nothing elſe but to pray for the Death and Ruine of many thouſands, whom yet the *Revealed Will* of God commands us to pray for, and to deſire all Good and Proſperity to them. But yet notwithſtanding all this, we may doubtleſs pray, that the *Will* of God's *Purpoſe* may be done ſo far as it brings to paſs thoſe things, which we are obliged to pray for by the *Will* of his *Precept*. We may pray that God's Will may be fullfilled in giving Peace and Proſperity and good things both Temporal and Spiritual unto others and to our ſelves, but ſimply and abſolutely to pray, That this Will ſhould be done in whatſoever it reſpects, would be as often a Curſe as a Prayer: Since (as I told you before) there is no evil comes to paſs, whether of ſin or puniſhment, but it is by God's Will permitting the one, and effecting the other.

But you will ſay, do we not find frequent *Examples* in *Scripture*, of Holy Men who have Prayed that God's Will might be done even in the bringing to paſs that which was evil. Thus *Ely* when *Samuel* had denounced fearful Judgments both againſt himſelf and againſt his Houſe, *It is the Lord*, ſays he, *let him do what ſeems good unto him.* 1 *Sam* 3. 18. And ſo *David*, when Perſecuted by the unnatural Rebellion of his Son *Abſalom*. *If he ſay thus, Behold I have no delight in him, let him do as ſeems good unto him*, 2 Sam. 15. 26. And thus the *Diſciples*, when upon *Agabus*'s Prophecy what Afflictions ſhould happen unto St. *Paul* at *Jeruſalem*, they would have perſwaded him from going thither, but could not prevail, conclude all with this, *The Will of the Lord be done*, Acts 21. 14. And thus likewiſe our great *Example*, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, when he had prayed that the bitter Cup of his Paſſion might paſs away from him, he ſeems to correct himſelf and make another Prayer, *Not my Will, but thine be done*, Luke 22. 42.

Although

Although he knew this Will of God could not be done without his own moſt extreme Sufferings, nor without the horrid ſin and wickedneſs of his Murderers.

But to all theſe inſtances I *Anſwer*, That they are not ſo much Prayers as Declarations of a ready Submiſſion and Obedience to the Will of God. For by this expreſſion, *The Will of the Lord be done*, we do not deſire that thoſe things ſhould come to paſs which will be grievous and afflicting to us; but only teſtifie our ready ſubjection to the Sovereign Will of God, and a patient reſignation of our ſelves and of all our concerns unto his diſpoſal. When we pray, we ought to beg of God that he would be pleaſed to avert from us thoſe Plagues and Judgments which our ſins juſtly expoſe us unto. But if it ſhall ſeem good to him to inflict any of them upon us, *The Will of the Lord be done*: That is, we deſire with Patience to ſubmit unto his Providence and contentedly to bear thoſe burthens which he ſhall impoſe upon us.

The ſum therefore of all is this, When we pray *Thy Will be done*; if it be the *Will* of God's *Precept*, we pray abſolutely that it may be done by us, as being obliged thereunto by his expreſs Word and Command. And if it be the *Will* of God's *Purpoſe*, intending any Temporal or Spiritual good unto us, we pray, that his Will may be done upon us. But if it be the *Will* of his *Purpoſe* to inflict any evil, then our ſaying, *Thy Will be done*, is not ſo much a Prayer as a Teſtimony of our ſubmiſſion to his Will without murmuring or repining at his Providence. Thus have we ſeen what this Will of God is that we pray may be done in this Petition, *Thy Will be done.*

Thirdly, The next thing to be taken notice of, is the Particle, *Thy*, *Thy Will be done*, and this carries in it both an Emphaſis and an Excluſion.

Firſt, *Thy Will*, emphatically to ſignifie unto us, That God's Will ought to be preferred above and before all

others. Not to regard the fancies and humours of Men when the Will of God is clear before us: nor to be careful to pleaſe them, but our Lord Chriſt; and if they will quarrel with us upon any ſuch account, we know whither to Appeal for our Juſtification, and for our Safety: For our Juſtification to their Conſciences: *Whether we ought to obey Men rather than God, Judge ye*, Acts 4. 19. And for our Protection and Safety to God's Power and Providence, with thoſe three *Heroick* Perſons, *Dan.* 3. 16, 17. *We are not careful, O King to anſwer thee in this matter. If it be ſo, our God whom we ſerve, is able to deliver us from the burning Fiery Furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand.* And there is great Reaſon for this preference of God's Will before all others.

Firſt, Becauſe God's Will is moſt Sovereign. He is the Supream Lord of the whole World: the greateſt of Men are but his Subjects and Vaſſals. Now it is infinitely more Reaſon that we ſhould conform our ſelves to the Will of him who is both our Lord and theirs, than to the Will of our fellow-ſervants: And that we ſhould ſeek to pleaſe him who is able to *deſtroy both our Souls and theirs*, than that we ſhould pleaſe them, who when their rage reacheth higheſt, can *deſtroy only this Body and vile Carcaſe*.

Secondly, Becauſe God's Will is the moſt Holy and Perfect, and there is nothing that he hath Commanded us to do, but it hath a native Goodneſs and Excellency in it, and therefore it is called, *The Good, the Acceptable, and Perfect Will of God*, Rom. 12. 2. To be governed by our own or other Mens Wills, is uſually to be led by Paſſion, and blind, head-long affections, but to give up our ſelves wholly to the Will of God, is to be governed by the higheſt Reaſon in the World: For his Will cannot but be good, ſince it is the meaſure and rule of goodneſs it ſelf; for therefore things are ſaid to be good becauſe God wills them. And whatſoever he requires of us, is pure and equitable, and moſt agreeable to the dictates of

of right and illuminated Reaſon: So that we act moſt like Men when we act moſt like Chriſtians, and ſhew our ſelves moſt Rational, when we ſhew our ſelves moſt Religious. And therefore we have a great deal of Reaſon to ſay, *Thy Will be done.*

Secondly, As this Particle, *Thy*, may be taken emphatically, *Thy Will* before all others; ſo likewiſe it may be taken excluſively, *Thy Will* and not our own be done. To teach us that hard Leſſon of Self-denial. Indeed, when we conſider the Rebellions of our corrupt Appetites and Deſires, and all thoſe tumults and uproars they raiſe in our Souls againſt the Holy and Perfect Will of God; the perverſe Diſputings of our Reaſon againſt his Authority, and thoſe ſtrong propenſions that are in us towards that which is diſpleaſing to him, and deſtructive to our ſelves, we ſhall find abundant need with our greateſt fervency to pray, *Thy Will* and not our own *be done.* And thus I have finiſhed the three Firſt Enquiries, what this Will of God is, how it may be ſaid to be done, and what is imported in this Particle, *Thy*. The

Fourth and laſt thing to be enquired into, is, What is meant by God's Will being *done on Earth.*

And here briefly, to reſolve this, That the Will of God ſhould be done on Earth, ſignifies, That it be done by Men living on the Earth, the place here being put for the perſons in it. And although there be ſeveral other Creatures beſides Man, who do all of them ſerve him and fullfill his Will according to the Rank and Station which they all hold. And therefore we have it expreſs'd, *Pſal.* 148. 8. *Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapour, ſtormy Wind fullfilling his Word.* Yet this his *Will* and *Word* is only the Ordinance of their Creation. And the *Will* of his *Purpoſe* to the effecting of which they are often employed as Inſtruments. It is not the *Will* of God's *Precept* obliging them to Duty; for this can be fullfilled by none but by rational and intelligent Creatures.

This Petition therefore, eſpecially, if not only, reſpects us Men whom God hath made Lords of this Earth, putting all other Creatures in ſubjection under us. Now here we pray,

Firſt, That all Men in the World renouncing the will of Satan and their own corrupt wills, may readily ſubject themſelves unto the Will of God. For this Expreſſion, *on Earth* ſuffers us not to limit our prayers to this or that particular Place or Region, but whereſoever God hath ſpread abroad all Nations upon the face of the Earth, we are to deſire of God for them Grace to enable them to do his Will, *Pſal.* 67. 2. *Let thy ways be known upon Earth, and thy ſaving Health unto all Nations.*

Secondly, We pray that we may employ and improve the few and ſhort days of this Mortal Life to the beſt advantage. For this is that day wherein we may work the Works of God; and if we neglect to do the Will of God while we are here on Earth, it will be too late for ever, for there is *no Work, nor Operation, nor Device in the Grave whither we are going.*

And certainly if ever we would do the Will of God in Heaven, we muſt accuſtom our ſelves to do it here on Earth. Here we are as Apprentices that muſt learn the Trade of Holineſs, that when our time is out, we may be fit to be made free *Denizons* of the *New Jeruſalem.* Here we are to tune our Voices to the Praiſes of God, before we come to joyn with the Heavenly Choire. Here we are to learn what we muſt there for ever practiſe. And thus I have done with the *Petition* it ſelf. *Thy Will be done in Earth.*

The next thing obſervable, is the proportion of it, *As it is in Heaven.*

But you will ſay, Is it not utterly impoſſible while we are here on Earth, and clogg'd with Earthly Bodies, and encompaſſed about with manifold Infirmities? Is it not impoſſible ever to attain unto a Celeſtial and Heavenly Perfection in our Obedience?

I Anſwer, True it is ſo, but yet this Prayer is not in vain, for it teacheth and engageth us to aim at and endeavour after the perfect Holineſs of *Angels* and the *Spirits of Juſt Men made Perfect*. We are commanded to be *Holy as God is Holy*, and *to be Perfect as our Heavenly Father is Perfect*, whoſe Perfection is impoſſible for us to equalize: Yet theſe exceſſive commands have their uſe, to raiſe up our endeavours to a higher ſtrain and pitch, than if we were commanded ſomewhat within our own power. As he that aims at a *Star* is likely to ſhoot much higher than he that aims at a *Turf*.

Thus though it be a thing altogether impoſſible for us in this Life to attain to an Angelical perfection in our Obedience; yet the command that obligeth us to it, and our Prayers for it are not in vain; becauſe by our utmoſt endeavours after further meaſures and degrees of Holineſs, we may very much aſſimilate our Obedience to that Obedience that is yielded to God's Will in Heaven it ſelf, and therefore this Particle, *As*, is rather a note of ſimilitude than of equality. But though our Obedience on Earth cannot be equal to the Obedience that is yielded to God in Heaven, yet we pray that it may bear as much ſimilitude, proportion and conformity unto it as is poſſible for us to attain unto while we are here in the Body.

And therefore that we may the more fully underſtand what it is we pray for when we preſent this Petition to God. *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven*, we ſhall briefly enquire, how the *Holy Angels* and *Bleſſed Spirits* do the Will of God in *Heaven*. And,

Firſt, Their Obedience is abſolutely perfect, and that both with a perfection of Parts and Degrees. They do all that God enjoyns them, not failing in the leaſt Tittle of Obſervance; and therefore they are ſaid, *To follow the Lamb whereſoever he goes*, Revel. 14. 14. Hence it is aſcribed to them

them as their proper and peculiar Character, *Pſal.* 103. 20. *Bleſs the Lord, ye his Angels that excel in ſtrength, that do his Commandments, hearkning to the voice of his Word.* And again, they do the whole Will of God with all their Might, with all their Mind, with the greateſt Intention that is poſſible, even to an *Angelical Nature*: never are they remiſs in their Service, or ſlack in their Attendance, but are continually Bleſſing and Praiſing of God, ſtanding ready to receive and execute his Commands and Commiſſions.

Now when we pray that we may do the *Will of God on Earth, as it is done in Heaven*; we pray for this Heavenly temper, that we may bear an Univerſal reſpect unto all God's Commandments: no more ſticking or pauſing at any thing that God requires of us, than an *Angel* or a *Glorified Saint* would do: But infolding all our Intereſt and Concerns in God's Glory, might reſpect nor value nothing but what tends to the promotion of that. This is to do God's Will as the *Angels* do it in Heaven.

Secondly, Their Obedience is cheerful, not extorted from them by violent conſtraints of Fear, or of Suffering; but it is their Eternal Delight, and their Service is their Felicity. And thus ſhould we pray, and endeavour to do the Will of God with Alacrity and Cheerfulneſs; not being haled to it as our Task, but eſteeming the Commands of God to be as the *Angels* do, our Glory and our great Reward. But alas, how infinitely ſhort do we fall of our Pattern? we think the *Sabbath* long, and *Ordinances* long and tedious, and are ſecretly glad when they are over: And what ſhould ſuch as we are do in Heaven, where there is a *Sabbath* as long as Eternity, and nothing but Holineſs there? And therefore we had need pray earneſtly, that God would now fit and prepare us for the Work of Heaven, while we are here on Earth; for elſe Heaven will not be Heaven, or a place of Happineſs unto us.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The Will of God is done in Heaven with zeal and ardency; and therefore it is said, *Pſal.* 104. 4. *That God maketh his Angels and Meſſengers a Flame of Fire.* And have not we abundance of need to pray for Conformity with them in this reſpect alſo? We do the Will of God ſo coldly and indifferently, that we our ſelves ſcarce take notice of what we are doing. We often bring Sacrifices to God, and either bring no Fire with us, but are frozen and dull; or elſe offer them up with ſtrange Wild-fire, and uſually are heated more with Paſſion and irregular Affections, than with Holy and pious Zeal. And,

Fourthly, The Will of God is done in Heaven with celerity and ready diſpatch; they are quick in executing the Commands of the great God and their Lord; and therefore are ſaid to have *Wings and to fly*, *Eſai.* 6. 2. And this expreſſion of Wings, and the flying of *Cherubims* and *Angels* is frequently mentioned in *Scripture*, only to intimate to us, the expedition they uſe in the Service of God. But alas, how dull and ſlow are we? how long do we conſult with Fleſh and Blood, and are diſputing the Will of our Sovereign Lord, when we ſhould be obeying it? When we are clearly convinced that ſuch a Duty is neceſſary to be done, how many delays, and excuſes, and procraſtinations do we make, being willing to ſtay the leiſure of every vile Luſt, and vain Impertinency, thinking it then time enough to ſerve God when we have nothing elſe to do. Certainly, this is not to do the *Will of God on Earth, as it is done in Heaven*, where, upon the firſt intimations of God's Will, they take Wings and execute it ſpeedily.

Fifthly, The Will of God is done in Heaven with all poſſible Proſtration, Reverence, and Humility: And therefore it is ſaid, *Rev.* 4. 10. that *the four and twenty Elders fell down before him that ſat upon the Throne, and Worſhip him that liveth for ever and ever, and caſt their Crowns before the Throne.* Crowns are themſelves Enſigns of Majeſty;

but

but here they caſt their very Crowns, all their Dignity and Glory at the Feet of God; and make their chiefeſt excellency it ſelf do Homage to him that is King of kings, and Lord of lords. And ſo ſhould we in all our ſerving of God, do it with reverence and godly fear, preſerving upon our Hearts an awful ſenſe and regard of the dreadful Majeſty before whom we appear.

Sixthly, The Will of God is done in Heaven with conſtancy and perſeverance. *They ſerve God Day and Night*, *Rev.* 7. 15. and are never weary of his work, no more than they are of their own Happineſs; for his Service is their Happineſs, and their Obedience their Glory. And thus ſhould we pray and endeavour that we might do the Will of God conſtantly and perſeveringly; for it is perſeverance that crowns all other Graces; and God hath promiſed to Crown our perſeverance with Glory and Eternal Life. And thus we ſee briefly in theſe Six Particulars, how the Will of God is done in Heaven.

To conclude this: Is there no other nor lower Pattern ſet us, than the perfect Obedience of *Angels* and *Glorified Spirits*? Let us not then content our ſelves with a comparative Obedience, and by meaſuring our ſelves with thoſe that are worſe, think highly of our own Perfections: Let us not applaud our ſelves with the boaſting Phariſee, with a *Lord, I thank thee, I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjuſt, Adulterers.* What is this to the Pattern that God hath ſet us for our imitation? Perhaps thou doſt but all this while compare thy ſelf with thoſe that are in *Hell*, and doſt God's Will not much better than ſuch have done, if this be all that thou canſt plead for thy ſelf: Whereas God hath ſet thee *Examples* for thy imitation in Heaven. Doſt thou endeavour to do his Will as *Seraphims* and *Cherubims*, and the whole Hoſt of Bleſſed *Spirits*? Thou liveſt it may be not ſo like a *Devil* as others do; but doſt thou live like an Angel? Doſt thou ſerve God with the ſame proportionable

able *Zeal*, *Ardency*, *Delight*, and *Conſtancy*, as thoſe *Holy Spirits* do, who always ſtand in the preſence of God, ready preſs'd to do his Will; if not, neither endeavoureſt after ſo high a degree of Obedience and Purity, know that thy imitation of any lower *Example* than that of Heaven, can never ſuffice to bring thee to Heaven. And thus I have finiſhed the Three firſt Petitions of this excellent Prayer; namely, thoſe that relate unto God; for the Petitions contained herein, as I ſaid in the beginning, were ſuch as immediately concerned God's Glory, or ſuch as immediately concerned our good. The Firſt I have already conſidered.

I now come to treat of thoſe Petitions which immediately concern our own Good; and that is either our Temporal or our Spiritual Good: Our Temporal Good, in praying for our daily Bread: Our Spiritual Good in the two laſt Petitions, wherein we pray for the Forgiveneſs of our Sins paſt, and for Deliverance from Sin for time to come.

I begin with the Firſt of theſe our Requeſts, or Petitions, for Temporal Bleſſings, contained in the Fourth Petition, *Give us this Day our daily Bread*; and here I ſhall conſider,

Firſt, The Order, and then the Petition it ſelf.

Firſt, The Order; and that is remarkable upon two Accounts.

Firſt, Whereas this Petition is placed in the midſt, and encompaſſed about with others that relate unto Spiritual Bleſſings; ſo that after we have prayed for the Glory of God, our Saviour teacheth us to make mention of our Temporal Wants, and ſo to paſs on again to beg Spiritual Mercies for our Souls. This may inſtruct us in the Government of our Lives, to uſe worldy Comforts as here we pray for them. Spiritual and Heavenly things are our greateſt Concern-

ments, and ſhould be our greateſt care; with theſe we ſhould begin, and with theſe we ſhould end; only God allows us the World as an *Inn*; we may call in at it, and refreſh our ſelves with the Comforts and Accommodations that we find, but we muſt not dwell nor ſet up our reſt there. We are all Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth; Heaven is our Country, and thither we are travelling, only in our Journey we may call and bait at the World, and take what we find provided for us with Sobriety and Thankfulneſs: And therefore this Bread that we here pray for, is elſewhere called the Staff of Bread, *Pſal.* 105. 16. *He brake the Staff of Bread. Ezek.* 5. 6. *I will break your Staff of Bread.* And all this is to put us in Mind that we are to ask for, and to uſe theſe Earthly Enjoyments only as Travellers, that make uſe of a Staff for their help and ſupport, whilſt they are in their paſſage home. And we are hereby alſo taught to crave no more than will ſuffice for our convenient Supplies, otherwiſe we make our Staff our Burden, and our Support it ſelf a Load and Preſſure.

Secondly, It is obſervable, that though we are commanded, *to ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and its Righteouſneſs*; with a Promiſe that all other Earthly things ſhall be added to us; yet here our Saviour places the Petition for Temporal Bleſſings, before the Two Petitions we preſent to God for Spiritual Bleſſings; and this Order hath ſeemed ſo ſtrange and incongruous to ſome, that hereupon alone they have been moved to affirm that this Bread which we here ask is not any Temporal good thing, but the Bread of Life, even Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, as ſhall be ſhown more by and by.

Now this Order doth not intimate to us, that Earthly Bleſſings are better and more conſiderable than Heavenly, or that they ſhould have the preference in our eſteem or deſires, (I hope there are none of us ſo brutiſh, nor ſo far degenerated into Beaſts, as to account the poor Enjoyments

of

of this Life, more valuable than the Pardon of Sin, and those Spiritual Mercies that are in a tendency to Eternal Life and Happiness.) But,

First, Our Saviour useth this method in his Prayer, in conformity to the method of Divine Providence towards us, which first gives us Life, and the necessities of it, and then Orders us Spiritual and Heavenly Blessings, as an accession, and happy addition to those Natural good things he bestows upon us.

Secondly, Because we are usually more sensible of our Temporal than of our Spiritual wants; our Saviour therefore doth by degrees raise up our Desires by the one to the other; for seeing we are commanded to pray for the supply even of our Temporal necessities, which are but trivial in regard of the necessities of our Souls; we cannot but be convinced that we ought to be much more earnest and importunate with God for Spiritual Mercies than for Temporal; by how much our Spiritual wants are more important and of vaster consequence than our Temporal. When therefore thou comest to this Petition, think with thy self, *O Christian*, if I must pray fervently and affectionately for my daily Bread, which can only nourish my vile Carcase for a few short years; a Carcase that must notwithstanding all these recruits shortly moulder into Dust, and it self become meat for Worms: How much more importunate ought I to be, for the Pardon of my Sins, and those Spiritual Mercies and Blessings, without which my precious and immortal Soul must eternally perish? Since Christ hath commanded us not to labour, and by consequence not to pray *for that Meat which perisheth*, with any comparative industry and earnestness, to our labouring and praying *for that which endureth to Eternal Life*. And thus much concerning the Order of this Petition.

In the Petition it ſelf we have,

Firſt, The matter of it, or that which we pray for, *Give us Bread.*

Secondly, The Kind, or Quality of it, called here, *daily Bread.*

Thirdly, Our Right and Property in it, *Our Daily Bread.*

Fourthly, The limitation of it in reſpect of time, *Give it us this Day.* Of all theſe briefly.

Firſt, The matter of this Petition, or that which we pray for, and that is Bread. *Give us our Bread.* By Bread here is meant all Temporal and Earthly Bleſſings, that contribute either to our being or to our well-being in this Life. And becauſe we have need of very many things for our preſent ſubſiſtence, as Food, Raiment, Habitation, and each of theſe comprehend many other neceſſaries in them; all which would have been too long particularly to enumerate in this compendious Prayer; therefore our Saviour hath ſumm'd them up in the word Bread; figuratively denoting all kinds of Proviſions neceſſary for this Natural Life, whereof Bread is the moſt uſual and the moſt uſeful. And therefore as when God ſpeaks of a Famine, he calls it *a Famine of Bread*, *Amos* 8. 11. Not as if a ſcarcity of Bread were the only Dearth intended by it, but that there ſhould be likewiſe a want of all things requiſite to the ſuſtentation of Life. So here when Chriſt teacheth us to pray, for our *Daily Bread*, this Phraſe extendeth to all things conducible to maintain Health, or to recover it; to preſerve Life, or to prolong it.

Some indeed think this too mean and ſordid a requeſt to be preferred to God, and would not have any of the low Conveniences of this preſent Life to have any place in a Prayer, all whoſe other parts are ſo Spiritual and Heavenly, and

and the whole ſo ſhort and compendious; where the Petitions are ſo few, they will not believe any of them ſhould be ſpent ſo trivially, as to beg that which, though they might not attain, yet they might be eternally Bleſſed and Happy; and therefore they interpret this Word, Bread, in a Spiritual ſence, and take it for the Food of the Soul, whereby it is nouriſhed unto Eternal Life; and eſpecially for our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is called the *Bread of Life*, John 6. 35. and *Living Bread which came down from Heaven*, verſe 51. But here ſeemeth no place for any ſuch Myſtical Interpretation, the Word Bread being put without any addition or like circumſtance that might refer it to Chriſt, or to Spiritual things; and therefore ought to be underſtood according to the Words literally and in their ordinary ſignification; although indeed it be here uſed by way of *Synechdoche*, one part of Temporal good things being put for the whole acceſſion of them. Now from this we are taught theſe three things.

Firſt, That Temporal Mercies and Bleſſings may lawfully be prayed for. And although we ought not to be moſt earneſt and importunate, nor to enlarge and expatiate moſt upon theſe requeſts, but more earneſtly to covet the beſt Gifts; yet neither is unworthy of a Chriſtian whoſe Affections and Converſation is in Heaven, to beg at God's Hands thoſe Mercies that he knows needful for the ſupport and comfort of this preſent Life; yea, we read of nothing more frequent than the Saints praying either for the removal of ſome Temporal Evil or Puniſhment, or the receiving of ſome Temporal Bleſſing or Favour. If I ſhould quote the *Scriptures*, I might tranſcribe a great part of the *Bible*; nay, ſo far were they from looking upon it as below them, that we find *Jacob* putting it into his *Indentures* when he bound himſelf to God, and made it as it were the Condition of his Obligation to God's Service, *Geneſ.* 28. 20. *Then Jacob vowed a Vow, ſaying, if God will be with me and keep me in this way*

way that I go, and will give me Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on, ſo that I come again to my Father's Houſe in Peace; then ſhall the Lord be my God. And indeed there is a great deal of Reaſon and Ground to pray for theſe things; for they are both needful for us, and God hath promiſed to give them to us.

Firſt, They are needful for us, as the means that God hath appointed for the preſervation of our Temporal Life and Being, in which we have ſo many opportunities to ſerve and glorifie him, and ſo many advantages to ſecure Heaven and Glory to our Souls: And therefore as we tender either the obtaining of Heaven, or the additional degrees of Glory and Happineſs there; ſo we ſtand obliged to pray that God would afford us thoſe neceſſaries that may conduce to the prolonging of our Natural Life; till having finiſhed our work we are made fit to receive our Wages and Reward. *Your Heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all theſe things*, ſays our Saviour, *Matth. 6.* 32. And therefore, though *Miracles* be a kind of a *Non-obſtante* to the Law of Nature, and a ſuſpenſion of the ordinary courſe of Providence; yet we often find God working a *Miracle* to ſupply theſe wants of his People; whereas it had been alike eaſie by another *Miracle*, to have cauſed them not to want; for it had been no more difficult for God to have kept *Elijah* from hungring, than it was to make the *Ravens* his *Purveyors*, or to make a *Barrel* of *Meal* become a whole Harveſt, or to open a Spring and Fountain in the *Cruiſe of Oyl*; but he chooſeth rather to ſupply theſe Wants than to ceaſe them, to keep us in a continual dependance upon him, that the ſenſe of our neceſſities might engage us to have continual recourſe unto God for relief.

Secondly, As Temporal good things are needful for us, ſo God hath promiſed to give them to us: *Pſal. 50. 15. Call upon me in the Day of Trouble, and I will deliver thee.* And,

My

My God, ſays the Apoſtle, *ſhall ſupply all your wants*, Phil. 4. 19. *The* Lord *will give Grace and Glory, and no good thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly*, Pſal. 84. 13. Thus we ſee Temporal good things may be pray'd for, both becauſe they are needful for us, and becauſe God hath promiſed them to us: Yet,

Secondly, They muſt be prayed for only conditionally; for they are only conditionally promiſed. And theſe conditions are two-fold. If they be conſiſtent with God's pleaſure, and if they be conducible to our good; for without the obſerving the one we ſhould not ſo much ſeem to Petition as to invade, and without obſerving the other we ſhould but beg a Curſe inſtead of a Bleſſing.

Thirdly, We may learn likewiſe that God is the Giver of every Temporal Mercy and Good thing. Whatever thou enjoyeſt, it is from his meer free Bounty. He ſpreads thy Table, fills thy Cup, makes thy Bed, puts on thy Garments; is the God of thy Health and Strength, and loadeth thee daily with his Benefits. If thou haſt riches, *it is the Bleſſing of God that maketh rich*, Prov. 10. 22. *It is God that giveth thee Power to get Wealth*, Deut. 8. 18. Haſt thou Credit and Reputation? It is God that *hideth thee from the Scourge of Tongues*, Job 5. 21. Haſt thou Friends? It is God that giveth thee Favour in their ſight. Haſt thou Gifts and Parts? *It is the Almighty that giveth thee Underſtanding*, Job 32. 8. And haſt thou Joy and Comfort in all theſe? It is God, who not only filleth thy Mouth with Food, but thy Heart with Gladneſs. Now God is ſaid to *Give us our daily Bread*, and all the neceſſaries of Life, eſpecially Two ways.

Firſt, By producing them and bringing them to us. He is the great Lord and Proprietor both of Heaven and Earth. *The Earth is the Lord's and the fulneſs thereof*; and he gives it to whom he will. He maketh it bring forth abundantly all its Stores for the uſe and ſervice of Man: For be the Chain

of

of Second Causes never so long, yet the first link of them is held in his Hand: And therefore we have it expressed, *Hosea* 2. 21, 22. *I will hear saith the Lord, I will hear the Heavens, and they shall hear the Earth, and the Earth shall hear the Corn, and the Wine, and the Oil, and they shall hear Jezreel.*

Secondly, God gives them, by Blessing them to us; without which Blessing our *daily Bread* would no more nourish us than so much Chaff: For had we all the abundance that the Earth could yield, and the Blessing of God with-held from it, the very Air would stifle us, and our very Food would famish us: For it is not so much by these things that we live; not so much by our *daily Bread*, as by every Word; that is, by *every Word* of Blessing upon them, *which proceedeth out of the Mouth of God*, Deut. 8. 3. And concerning those to whom he denies this his Blessing, he tells us, *Job* 20. 22. *In the fullness of their sufficiency they shall be in straights.* And therefore when we pray that God would give us our *daily Bread*, we pray not only that God would give us the Possession and Enjoyment of Earthly Comforts; but that he would put Virtue and Efficacy into them, by his Blessing upon them, to be subservient to our relief and support, without which the Staff of Bread would break under us, and the stay of Water roll away from us. And thus much for the first thing, *Give us Bread.*

Secondly, Let us consider, the Specification of this Blessing, or the Kind and Quality of it, our *daily Bread.* This Word ἄρτον, is variously rendred, I shall not trouble you with the particular Notions of it; let it suffice, that here by the Word, Bread, is meant our ordinary and usual Bread, or whatsoever is necessary for our subsistence in the World from Day to Day. And it is the same with what is expressed in that excellent Prayer of *Agur.* Prov. 30. 8. *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches, feed me with Food convenient for*

for me. So do we pray here, that he would bestow upon us daily, that which is sufficient for the day. And by this we are taught to moderate our Desires, and to beg of God no more than is needful for us. We beg not delicacies; we beg *daily Bread*, not superfluites, nor Goods laid up for many years.

But now because the measures of necessities are divers, and that may be but *daily bread* to one, which to another is superfluity, it will be requisite to shew you by what necessities our Prayers are to be bounded.

I *Answer*, First, We may pray for the supply of all our Natural necessities: And to this the Sovereign Principle of self-preservation strongly obligeth us. And he that prays not nor endeavours for this, is a self-murderer in with-holding from himself what is simply, and absolutely necessary for the maintenance of his Life.

Secondly, Besides things that are naturally necessary, there are things that are civilly necessary, which are not so absolutely Imperious as the other; yet these also oblige us to pray for supplies and relief. I account those things civilly necessary, which though they are not simply necessary to the preservation of our Life, yet are necessary to the State and Condition in which Divine Providence hath set us. As for Men of High Birth, of Publick Note, or Publick Employment, more is necessary for them, than for others, whom God hath placed to take up a narrower room in the World. For *Cedars* require more Sap than *Shrubs*: And for such as these to pray against poverty, is possibly to pray for much more than would make private persons rich. We are allowed to pray for such a competent measure of Earthly Blessings as is suitable to our Station, and commensurate to our charge and burthens; and according to the Judgment of Christian prudence, apparently needful, for those whom we are bound to provide for, that they may live honestly

neſtly and decently. All theſe are neceſſaries that we are to pray for in this Petition, *give us our daily Bread.*

But we muſt take heed that neither Covetouſneſs nor Ambition impoſe upon us, and make us meaſure neceſſaries by our inordinate Deſires, rather than by our real Wants. For whatſoever is more than enough for our preſent State and Comfortable Subſiſtence, is not our *daily Bread*, but the Bread of the Poor, out of whoſe mouths we ſnatch it. And whatſoever we lay up with great deſigns of enlarging our ſelves or our Poſterity beyond our Lawful meaſure, are but Treaſures of wickedneſs, whoſe ruſt will Witneſs againſt us at the laſt day. And thus much for the Second Obſervable.

Thirdly, in the Words of this Petition, are deſigned our Right and Propriety to this daily Bread: *Give us our daily Bread.*

Now right to a Temporal Enjoyment is Three-fold, either Natural, or Spiritual, or Civil. Natural by Creation. Spiritual by Regeneration. And Civil by Humane and Legal Conſtitution.

Firſt, As for the Natural Right by Creation, that was once found in *Adam*, who was made the viſible Lord of the Univerſe, and all things put under his feet. We may read his *Patent* and *Charter*, Gen. 1. 28. *And God ſaid unto him, be fruitful, and multiply, and repleniſh the Earth and ſubdue it, and have Dominion over the Fowl of the Air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the Earth.* But this Right we have loſt, and can call nothing ours upon this account. Only as *Princes* allow *Traitors* and *Malefactors* Proviſion in their Priſon till they come to Execution. So God allows many Wicked Men many Earthly Enjoyments out of the meer bounty of Priſon-Proviſion, to keep them alive till they are brought forth to their Execution. This Natural Right therefore being loſt, there ſucceeds in the room of it,

Secondly

Secondly, A *Spiritual Right* to Earthly Comforts. And this belongs unto all those who themselves do belong to Christ: for he is made the Heir of all things. And all things both in Heaven and Earth are consigned over unto him by a Deed of Gift from God his Father, and they being united unto Christ, and his Spiritual Offspring, are Heirs with Christ, and Co-heirs of all that ample Dominion which Christ himself possesseth. And upon this ground the *Apostle* tells the *Corinthians*, in 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23. *All things are yours, the World, things present and things to come, all are yours*; and he subjoyns this reason for it, *for ye are Christ's.* But yet this *Spiritual Right* is not to be extended to an Usurpation upon the Temporal Enjoyments of others. For Grace and Holiness being a thing wholly inward and invisible, cannot conferr any outward Title. For this,

Thirdly, Is given by another Right, which is Civil, according to the constitution of Humane Laws, and the Process in Courts of Humane Judicature. For Law is the only distributer of *meum* and *tuum.* And we can call nothing ours which is not so, or ought not to be so by the Sentence of the Law under which we live; and he that detaineth any thing which the Sentence of the Law adjudgeth to another, is guilty of Theft and Robbery.

Now when we pray for our *daily bread*, we pray,

First, That God would give us the good things of this Life to be obtained by us in a Lawful Regular manner.

Secondly, That he would bless and increase those good things that are rightfully our own.

Thirdly, That he would bestow upon us a Spiritual right in whatsoever we enjoy through Jesus Christ, who is the Heir and Possessor of all things. And,

Fourthly, We pray that we may not desire nor covet that which is anothers: for we are taught to pray only for that which we may justly call ours, to which we have as well a Civil as a Spiritual Right and Title. And thus much for the third particular.

Fourthly, We have in the words the limitation of the Petition in reſpect of time. *Give us this day our daily bread.* And indeed there is great reaſon why we ſhould pray for it *this day*, for we every day ſtand in need of relief and ſupplies from God. Our wants and our Troubles grow up thick about us, and unleſs God make daily proviſions for us, we ſhall be over-run by them. Food nouriſhes but a day, and that which we receive this day, will not ſuffice us to morrow. There is a continual Spring and Fountain of neceſſities within us, and therefore we muſt have continual recourſe unto God by prayer, that he would *daily* ſatisfie and ſupply our Wants, as they *daily* riſe up about us.

Again, by teaching us to pray for our Temporal Comforts *this day*, our Saviour tacitly intimates to us, that we ſhould be content with our *daily* allowance. It is enough, if we have our *Dimenſum*, our appointed Food for the day. To morrow is in God's hand, and the care of it is his and not ours, and therefore he bids us, *take no thought for to morrow*; that is with no tormenting, carking and deſponding thoughts, *Matth.* 6. 34. And indeed if we are provided for this day, we may well reſt content and ſatisfied in the Providence of God, ſince he hath engaged his Word of Promiſe, *That he will never leave us nor forſake us.*

Now in this part of the Petition, there are ſundry things we pray for. As,

Firſt, We pray for Life it ſelf, that it may be prolonged, whilſt God hath any Service for us to do in the World.

To this very end we pray for *daily Bread*, that Life may be maintained and preſerved by it.

Secondly, Health and Strength of Body, which is indeed the greateſt of Temporal Bleſſings, and the ſalt to all the reſt, without which they are unſavory and taſteleſs.

Thirdly, All the means that God's Providence hath appointed to preſerve Life and Health, and to recover Health when it is decay'd and impair'd. Fourthly.

Fourthly, Success in our Lawful Calling and Endeavours for the procuring any Conveniencies and Comforts of Life. For in this Prayer we beg a Blessing upon our Callings and Industry, that God would prosper us in them, and by them encrease our Temporal Enjoyments, so far forth as is needful to his own Glory and our Good.

Fifthly, we beg a Blessing from Heaven upon whatsoever we enjoy that it may indeed prove good and comfortable to us; without which all that we possess may prove a great heap of things, but none of them will be Comforts or Enjoyments.

And thus I have finished the First of those Petitions that immediately concern our selves, wherein we beg of God the supply of all our Temporal Wants. The Two which remain respect Spiritual Blessings, of which the former (which is the Fifth Petition in Order of this most Excellent Prayer) is for the Pardon of Sin, *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.* Of which I now come to treat.

And here before we come to the Petition it self, let us briefly take notice of the connexion and dependance that it hath upon what went before.

Having prayed for *our daily Bread*, we are next taught to pray for Pardon. And this method is indeed most Wise, and most Rational. For,

First, The guilt of Sin many times with-holds from us those Earthly Comforts we stand in need of. We have forfeited all into the hands of God's Justice, and he is pleased to make us know our obnoxiousness to his Power and Wrath, by denying or taking from us those Temporal good things as a due, though the least punishment of our deserts, *Esai.* 59. 2. *Your Iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your Sins have hid his Face from you, that he will not hear you.* And therefore when we have prayed for *our daily Bread*, we are to pray likewise for the *Pardon of our Sins.* That the Partition between God and us may be removed,

removed, and his Blessing being no longer obstructed by our guilt, may descend down freely and plentifully upon us.

Secondly, Without *Pardon of Sin*, all our Temporal Enjoyments are but Snares and Curses unto us. Though God doth sometimes bestow abundance of this World's good things upon impenitent and unpardoned Sinners, yet they have not so many Enjoyments as Curses: Their Bread is kneaded up with a Curse, and their Wine tempered and mingled with a Curse; there is Poyson in their Meat, and Death in their Physick, their Table is their Snare, their Estate their Fetters; and whatsoever should have been for their wellfare, proves only a Gin and a Trap unto them; for the Wrath of God is one direful Ingredient among all that they possess. And therefore, if we would have *our daily Bread* given us, or Comfort and Blessing with it, we ought earnestly to beg the *Pardon of our Sins*, which are like the Worm in *Jonah*'s *Goard*, which will wither and devour all our Enjoyments. And thus much for the Method and Order.

In the Words themselves we have,

First, The Petition, *Forgive us our Debts.*

Secondly, The Condition or Proportion, or Plea and Argument, (call it which you will) for the obtaining of this forgiveness, *as we forgive our Debtors.*

In the Petition we may observe, that the same which our *Evangelist* calls *Debts*, is by St. *Luke* 11. 4. called Sins, *Forgive us our Sins.* We stand indebted to God both as we are his Creatures, and as we are Offenders: By the one we owe him the *Debt of Obedience*; and by the other, the *Debt of Punishment.*

First, As we are Creatures, we owe the *Debt of Obedience*: And to the payment of this *Debt* we stand bound both to the absolute Sovereignty of God, who is the Supreme Lord of all his Creatures, and therefore may oblige them

them to what he pleaſeth; and likewiſe by his manifold Favours and Mercies conferred upon us. From him we have received our Beings and all our Comforts; he maintains us at his own Coſt and Charge, he enlargeth us when we are in Streights, relieves us when we are in Wants, Counſels us when we are in Doubts, Comforts us when we are in Sorrows, Delivers us in our Dangers; and beſides the manifold Temporal Mercies we daily receive from him, gives us the Means, the Hopes and Promiſes of obtaining far better things at his Hands, even Eternal Life and Glory: And therefore certainly upon theſe Accounts we owe him all poſſible Service and Obedience. And indeed it is but Reaſon we ſhould employ all for him, from whom we receive all; and give up our ſelves to his Service, who are what we are by his Bounty, and hope to be infinitely better, than now we are, through his Mercy.

Now this *Debt* of *Obedience* is irremiſſible, and we are eternally and indiſpenſably bound unto it: For it is altogether inconſiſtent with the Notion and Being of a Creature, to be diſcharged from its Obligation to the Laws and Commands of its Creator; for this would exempt it from the Dominion of God, and make it Abſolute and Independent; that is, it would make the Creature to be no longer a *Creature* but a *Deity*. We do not therefore pray, that God would forgive us this *Debt*; no, he cannot ſo far deny himſelf, and it is our Happineſs and Glory to pay it: To this his Sovereignty obligeth our Subject Condition, and his Mercy and Goodneſs our Ingenuity.

Secondly, As we are Tranſgreſſors, ſo we owe God a *Debt of Puniſhment*, to be ſuffered by us to make God ſome reparation to his Honour, and ſatisfaction to his Juſtice, for our tranſgreſſing his Law, which ſenteneeth all Offenders to Eternal Death and Damnation.

This;

This *Debt* now is that which we pray God would forgive us; a *Debt*, which if we pay, we are eternally ruined and undone; and there is no way poſſible to eſcape the payment of it, but by the free Grace and Mercy of God remitting of it unto us: And thus Sin is called a *Debt*, not indeed properly, as if we owed it, but by a *Metonymy*, as it is the meritorious Cauſe of this puniſhment, the ſuffering of which we owe to Divine Juſtice.

Hence, by the way, we may obſerve that every Sin makes us liable to Eternal Death; for Death and Damnation is the *Debt* which we muſt pay to the Juſtice of God, and Sin is that which expoſeth us unto it, by the Sentence of the Law which we have tranſgreſſed. For as againſt other *Debtors* is brought forth ſome Bond or Obligation to exact payment from them: So againſt us is produced the Hand-writing of the Law, and we not having performed the Condition of the Bond, ſtand liable to the Forfeiture and Penalty, which is no leſs than Curſes, and Woes, and Torments, and Everlaſting Death. *Curſed is every one that continues not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them*, Gal. 3. 10. And, *the Wages of Sin is Death*, Rom. 6. 23. And, *the Soul that ſinneth it ſhall Die*, Ezek. 18. 4. Now here to excite thee to a fervency in praying for the forgiveneſs of thy *Debts*, conſider,

Firſt, The infinite multitudes of thy *Debts*. God's Book is full of them, and there they ſtand on account againſt us under every one of our Names. We were born *Debtors* to God; our Original Sin and Guilt obligeth us to puniſhment; and although we did not perſonally contract the *Debt*, yet as being the wretched Heirs and Executors of *fallen Adam*, the *Debt* is legally devolved upon us and become ours. And ever ſince we came into the World we have run upon the ſcore with God, our *Debts* are more than our Moments have been; for whatſoever we have thought or done hath been

been Sin, either in the matter, or at leaſt in the circumſtances of it. God ſets all our Sins down in order in his *Debt-book*; ſome as *Talents*, and ſome as *Pence*. Our flagitious Crimes and hainous Impieties, our preſumptuous Sins, committed againſt Light, Knowledge, Conſcience, Convictions, Mercies, and Judgments; each of theſe God ſets down as a *Talent*: And how many thouſands of theſe may we have been guilty of? Our Sins of Ignorance, Surreption, and daily Infirmity are much more innumerable, and though they may be but as *Pence* in compariſon with the other, yet the unaccountable numbers of them will make the *Debt* deſperate, and the payment impoſſible. And yet notwithſtanding our *Debts* are ſo many, and very many of them ſuch great Sums too; yet we daily run our ſelves farther in Arrears, not conſidering that a Day of Accounts will come, when both our Talents and our Pence ſhall be punctually reckoned up againſt us, not omitting the leaſt *Item*; when every vain Thought, and fooliſh Paſſion, that hath fluſhed up in us, with every idle and ſuperfluous Word that we have unadviſedly ſpoken, as well as the more groſs and ſcandalous Paſſages of our ſinful Lives, ſhall be then audited; all which will make the Total Sum infinite, and us deſperate.

Secondly, That God, who is thy *Creditor*, is ſtrict and impartial; his Patience hath truſted and forborn thee long; but his Juſtice will at laſt demand the *Debt* ſeverely, and every particular ſhall be charged upon thee even to the utmoſt Farthing; for he hath booked down all in his remembrance, and will bring all to thine: And therefore we have it expreſſed concerning the laſt Judgment, that *the Books were opened, and the Dead were Judged, out of thoſe things which were written in the Books, according to their Works*, *Rev.* 20. 12. What now are theſe Books, but the two great Volumes of God's remembrance, and our own Conſciences? Theſe are two *Tallies* evenly ſtruck, that ſhall juſtly repre-

ſent the ſame Sum and *Debt*, and God's ſtrict Juſtice will not then abate thee any thing of its utmoſt due; for he will by no means acquit the Guilty. Indeed we are apt to think that becauſe God ſo long forbears us, he will never calls us to make up and adjuſt Accounts with him. Our preſent impunity tempts us to queſtion his Omniſcience, and to ſuſpect his Threatnings; and becauſe he winks at us, we are ready to conclude that he is Blind; we are of that wretched temper deſcribed, *Pſal.* 50. 21. *Becauſe God keeps ſilence, we think he is altogether ſuch a one as our ſelves*: As careleſs in requiring his *Debts*, as we are in contracting them; but he will reprove us, and ſet them in order before our Faces, to our everlaſting ſhame and confuſion.

Thirdly, That the leaſt of all theſe thy Debts make thee liable to be caſt into the Priſon of Hell, and to be adjudged to Eternal Death and Puniſhments. Not only thy impudent and ſcandalous Sins which make thee deteſted of Men as well as hated of God; but the leaſt ſhadow of a thought that gives but an umbrage of vanity to thy Mind, the leaſt motion and heaving of thy Heart towards a ſinful Object, the exhaling but of one ſinful Deſire, the wavering of thy Fancy, a glance of thine Eye, is a *Debt* contracted with the infinite Juſtice of God; and a *Debt* that without forgiveneſs muſt be paid in the Infernal Priſon of Hell: So ſays our Saviour, *Matth.* 5. 26. *Verily thou ſhalt not come out thence till thou haſt paid the utmoſt Farthing.*

Beware therefore then that you do not entertain any ſlight thoughts of Sin; nor think, with the *Papiſts*, that there are ſome ſorts of Sins that do not deſerve Death, which they call *Venial* Sins, in oppoſition to other more groſs and hainous Sins, which they allow to be *Mortal*. Believe it, the leaſt prick at the Heart is *deadly*; and ſo is the leaſt Sin to the Soul. And indeed it is a Contradiction to call any Sin *Venial*, in their ſence, who hold it is not worthy of Damnation; for if it be a Sin, it is worthy of Damnation, for

for *the Wages of Sin is Death*; if it be not, How is it *Venial*? There is but one Mortal Sin, ſimply and abſolutely ſuch, as God hath revealed in his Word, that it ſhall never be pardoned, neither in this World, nor in that which is to come; and that is the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which St. *John* therefore calls *a Sin unto Death*, 1 Joh. 5. 16. And ſo far are they who are guilty of it excluded from God's Mercy, that they are excluded from the Charity of our Prayers; for we are not ſo much as to pray for ſuch, as it is there expreſſed.

Again, all the Sins of finally impenitent and unbelieving Wretches are eventually Mortal, and ſhall certainly be puniſhed at laſt with Eternal Death and Damnation; *For the Wrath of God abideth on him that believeth not*, Joh. 3. 16. And God will *render Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh, upon every Soul of Man that doth evil*, Rom. 2. 9. All Sins whatſoever are Mortal meritoriouſly, both in the Penitent and in the Impenitent; the Law hath condemned all alike, though all Sins are not alike hainous, nor ſhall be equally puniſhed; but with ſome it ſhall be far more intolerable than with others; yet all are alike Mortal and deſerve Death and the ſame *Hell*, though not the ſame Place, nor the ſame Degree of Torments in *Hell*; for thoſe Sins which are accounted moſt Trivial and Venial, are in themſelves Violations of the Holy Law of God, and the Penalty that his Laws threaten is no leſs than Death. The Law is accurate and reacheth to the leaſt things; yea, to the leaſt circumſtances of thoſe things; and every Tranſgreſſion againſt it ſhall receive its due recompence of reward: Nay, had we no other guilt left upon our Souls, from the firſt moment of our lives to this preſent day, but only the guilt of the leaſt Sin that the Holy Law condemns; be it only the wrenching aſide of a Thought or Deſire, only a bye and ſiniſter end in the performance of Holy Duties; nay, let it be but the firſt rudiment and imperfect draught

of a Thought not yet finiſhed, without a full ſatisfaction and expiation, this ſmall *Debt* would caſt us into Priſon, this little Sin would ſink us irrecoverably into *Hell*, and lay us under the Revenges of the Almighty God for ever.

Oh then with what horrour and amazement may Sinners reflect upon their paſt Sins! With what dread and trembling may they expect their future State, ſince as many thouſand Sins as they have committed of all ſizes and aggravations, ſo many *Deaths* and *Hells* heaped up one upon another have they deſerved, and without intervention of a full payment and ſatisfaction muſt they be adjudged to undergo? For though the leaſt degree of Divine Wrath be a *tormenting Hell*; yet God will inflame his Wrath to as many degrees of acrimony and ſharpneſs as they have committed Sins, till their Puniſhment be equal to their Offences, and become infinitely intolerable.

Fourthly, Conſider, thou canſt never pay God, nor diſcharge the leaſt of thy Debts for ever. For,

Firſt, Thou canſt not poſſibly do it by any Duties or Services in this Life: For whatſoever thou doſt is either required, or not required; if it be not required, it will be ſo far from being a ſatisfaction for thy Sins, that it will be an addition to them, and a piece of Will-worſhip, which will meet with that ſad Greeting at the laſt Day, *who hath required theſe things at your Hands*? If it be required, it is no more than thou oweſt to God before, and if thou hadſt never ſinned wert obliged to pay it. To think to ſatisfie for thy Sins by thy Duties, is but to rob one Attribute of God to pay another; for whatſoever Obedience thou canſt perform, thou oweſt it to the Sovereignty and Holineſs of God, and his Juſtice will never accept of that which belongs to his Authority. Beſides it is abſurd to think to pay one Duty by another, to diſcharge the *Debt* of Sin by paying the *Debt* of Duty.

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Secondly, Thou canſt not pay off thy *Debts* by any Sufferings hereafter. It is true Sinners ſhall lie eternally in Priſon, and be eternally ſatisfying the offended Juſtice of God; but in all that Eternity there ſhall never be that moment wherein they may ſay, as Chriſt did in his making ſatisfaction, *it is finiſhed*, the Debt is paid, and Juſtice hath received as much as was due from me. No that ſatisfaction muſt be eternally making; and therefore the puniſhment muſt be eternally laſting: For every Sin, even the leaſt Sin, is committed againſt an infinite God; and therefore the puniſhment of it muſt be infinite: For Offences take their meaſures, as well from the Dignity of the Perſon againſt whom they are committed, as from the hainouſneſs of the Fact in it ſelf conſidered. As a reviling Word againſt the *King* is Treaſonable, againſt our Equals but actionable; and therefore by the ſame proportion, the ſame Offence againſt the infinite Majeſty of the great God, muſt needs carry infinite guilt in it; that is, expoſeth to infinite puniſhment.

Now then, O Sinner, think with thy ſelf, what ſatisfaction thou canſt make to God that can bear a proportion to thy infinite Offences. Thou canſt not at once undergo an infinite meaſure of puniſhment, for thy Nature is but finite. Couldſt thou do this, then indeed there were hope; yea, certainty of relief for thee; for Divine Juſtice will not exact more than its due. But becauſe this is impoſſible, thy Woes and Torments in Hell muſt be Eternal, that they may be ſome way infinite as the Juſtice is which thou haſt offended; infinite, if not in Degrees, yet in duration and continuance.

And O what dreadful deſpair will this cauſe in thee when thou ſhalt have been in Hell under moſt acute and inſufferable Torments Millions of years, and yet the payment of all that ſum of Plagues and Woes, ſhall not be of value enough to ſatisfie for the leaſt of thy Sins, nor to croſs out of God's Book the leaſt and ſmalleſt of thy *Debts*: but thy account ſhall ſtill be as great, and as full as it was at thy firſt

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plunging into *Hell*, and ſtill an Eternity of Torments remains to be paid by thee!

And now wretched Creatures that we are, whither ſhall we turn our ſelves? what hope, what relief can we find? ſhall we flatter our ſelves that God will not require our ſins at our hands? no: they are *Debts* and therefore he may, and he is a Juſt God, Juſt to himſelf, and to the Intereſt of his own Glory, and therefore he will: God hath beforehand told us, at what rate we muſt expect to take up our ſins, and what we muſt pay for them at the laſt. He hath told us as plainly as the mouth of Truth can utter it, that *the Wages of ſin is Death*, and the ways Sinners chooſe, lead down to the Chambers of *Hell* and *Deſtruction*. Our own Miſery is our own choice. He hath in his Word ſet Life and Death before us, and declared to us the means how we might eſcape the one and obtain the other. He hath repreſented to us the unconceiveableneſs of both: And if we will be ſo obſtinate as after theſe manifeſt repreſentations, to chooſe Hell and Death, it is but Reaſon and Juſtice that we ſhould have our own Choice; for it is our Choice interpretatively, when we chooſe thoſe ways and actions that expoſe to them.

And thus much concerning the acknowledgement we make in this Petition, *our Debts*. *Debts*, vaſt and infinite, which the Juſtice of God will ſtrictly require of Sinners in their Eternal Condemnation. *Debts*, the leaſt of which makes us liable to be caſt into Priſon, into Hell, and for the leaſt of which we can never ſatisfie.

But what is there no hope? Is there no poſſibility to croſs the Book, to cancel the Obligation whereby we ſtand bound to the revenging Juſtice of God, and everlaſting Sufferings?

Truly none by our own perſonal ſatisfaction; but yet there is abundant hope, yea full aſſurance of it, through the free Mercy of our God. And therefore as our Saviour hath

hath taught us to acknowledge our *Debts*, ſo he hath likewiſe taught us to pray, *Father, forgive us our Debts.*

And now that I have ſhewed you our Miſery by reaſon of our *Debts*, and you have ſeen the black ſide of the Cloud, which interpoſeth between God and us. So give me leave to repreſent to you our Hopes and Conſolation in God's free Grace, and the Divine Mercy in diſſolving this black Cloud, that it may never more appear. And here let us,

Firſt, Conſider what the Pardon of ſin is. And this we cannot better diſcover, than by looking into the Nature of ſin. Sin therefore, as St. *John* deſcribes it, 1 *John* 3. 4. *is a tranſgreſſion of the Law of God.* And to the validity of all Laws, it is neceſſary that there be a penalty annexed, either literally expreſs'd, or tacitly implied. The guilt that we contract by tranſgreſſing the Law, is nothing elſe but our liableneſs to undergo this penalty. And this guilt is Twofold; the intrinſecal and formal, and that is the deſert of puniſhment, which ſin always neceſſarily carries in it as it is a violation of a Holy and Righteous Commandment.

The other is extrinſecal and adventitious, and conſiſts in the appointment and deſignation of the ſinner unto puniſhment. This now doth not formally flow from ſin, but from the Will of God conſtituting and willing to puniſh ſin with Death.

Now Pardon is nothing elſe but the removal of the guilt of ſin. But now the queſtion is, which guilt it removeth. I Anſwer,

Firſt, It doth not remove the intrinſeral guilt of ſin, or the deſert of puniſhment. For the ſins of thoſe who are Juſtified and Pardoned, do yet in their own Nature, deſerve Death and Eternal Damnation. As a *Pardon* vouchſafed to a *Traitor*, doth not cauſe his Actions not to have been Treaſonable and worthy of Death: for this doth neceſſarily follow immediately upon the Tranſgreſſing of the Law, to which the Penalty is annexed. So neither is it in the

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Power of Pardoning Grace to make that our ſins ſhould not deſerve Death, according to their own demerit; for that were a contradiction, ſince this demerit, is neceſſary and eſſential unto ſin as ſuch.

Secondly, Therefore *Pardon of ſin* removes that guilt which conſiſts in the adventitious Appointment or Ordination of the ſinner unto Puniſhment, flowing from the Will of God, who hath in his Law threatned to inflict Eternal Death as the Reward and Wages of ſin. Now this deſignation of the ſinner unto puniſhment is Two-fold; either *Perſonal* or *Myſtical*. One of theſe two ways God will certainly puniſh every Soul that ſins: either by appointing the ſinner *Perſonally* to undergo the puniſhment of his iniquities; and thus he deals with unbelievers whom he will puniſh in their own Perſons for their tranſgreſſions. Or elſe he appoints them to undergo the puniſhment of their ſins *Myſtically*, as being by Faith made one with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who himſelf hath born our ſins in his own Body on the Tree. Now Pardon of ſin doth not remove the *Myſtical* appointment of a Believer unto Puniſhment, for he hath ſuffered it, for Chriſt hath ſuffered it, and Chriſt and he are one *Myſtical* Perſon by Faith. God never Pardons but he likewiſe puniſhes the very ſin that he Pardons; he puniſheth it in our ſurety and undertaker when he forgives it to a Believer. *Pardon of ſin* therefore removes only that guilt which conſiſts in our own Perſonal appointment and deſignation to puniſhment: though the ſin doth always in it ſelf neceſſarily deſerve Death, though that Death hath been inflicted upon Chriſt, and therefore upon Believers in him, as Members of him.

But yet notwithſtanding that God thus takes Vengeance on our ſins, he doth Graciouſly Pardon them when he releaſeth our Perſonal Obligation unto puniſhment, and reckons that we have ſuffered the penalty, in Chriſt ſuffering

ing it, and therefore ought to be discharged from any further liableness unto it.

This now is that *Pardon of sin* which we pray for when we say, *Forgive us our Debts.* And for the more full Explication of it, I shall lay down these following positions.

First, The Pardoning Grace of God in respect of us, is altogether free and undeserved. We can of our selves scarce so much as ask forgiveness, but even this comes from the Grace of God, therefore much less can we do any thing to merit it. Far be it from us to affirm as the *Papists* do, that Good Works proceeding from Grace are Meritorious of Pardon and Salvation: Alas, what are our Prayers, our Sighs, our Tears, yea our very Blood, should we spend it for Christ? They are but poor imperfect things, and are so far from having in them any infinite worth and value to counterbalance our sins, that the defects of them add to the number of our other Transgressions. They cannot all of them make one blot in the Book of God's Remembrance, but may well make more Items there against us. Had it been possible for Men to have quitted scores with Divine Justice by what they could do or suffer: Heaven would not have been so needlessly lavish, as to send Christ into the World, to lead an afflicted Life, and to die an accursed Death, only for our Redemption and Salvation.

Secondly, The Pardoning Grace of God is not free in respect of Christ, but it cost him the price of Blood. It is the Blood of the Lamb *Slain from the Foundation of the World*, that crosseth the Debt-Book. *Without shedding of Blood there is no remission*, says the *Apostle*, Heb. 9. 22. *And this is my Blood which was shed for the Remission of sins*, Matth. 26. 28. And although possibly God might according to his absolute Sovereignty have freely remitted all the sins of all the World, without any kind of Satisfaction, only by a Free and Gracious Act of Mercy: Yet considering that he had otherwise declared in his unalterable Word of

Truth, that there must be a recompence made him for all our offences, it had been a wrong to his *Veracity*, if not to his *Justice*, to have granted the Pardon of any one sin without the intervention of a full price and satisfaction. No satisfaction could be made correspondent to the wrong done to an infinite God, but by an infinite Person who was God himself; for had the Person been finite, the Sufferings must have been Eternal, otherwise they could not have been proportionable to the offence, which requires an infinite Satisfaction: But if the Sufferings had been Eternal, Satisfaction could never have been made, but would for ever have been making unto the Justice of God, and consequently our sins could never have been Pardoned. And therefore God appointed to this Work of reconciling himself to fallen Man, his only begotten Son, God Co-equal, and Co-eternal with himself, and every way infinite as himself, that he might be able to bear the whole Wrath of God at once, and at one bitter draught, drink off the whole Cup of Fury which we should have been draining by little drops to all Eternity. So that Justice being satisfied in the Sufferings of Christ, for the sins of those whose Persons, and whose guilt he sustained upon the Cross; Mercy hath now a way opened to Glorifie its Riches in their Pardon and Salvation.

Thus in these two Positions, it appears that though the remitting of our sins be an Act of God's Free Grace and Mercy in respect of us, yet it is the effect of Purchace in respect of Christ. God Pardons sins to them who committed them, upon their Faith and Repentance; but he Pardons not those very sins to Christ, to whom they were imputed, but exacted Satisfaction from him to the very utmost rigour of Justice. Hence it follows,

Thirdly, That the Pardon of sin is not only an Act of meer Free Grace and Mercy, but according to the Terms of the Covenant of Grace, it is also an Act of Justice in God. Indeed both Mercy and Justice are concurrent in it,

for

for ſince by the Union of Faith we are made one *Myſtical* Body with Chriſt, it could not conſiſt with the Equity of God to puniſh the ſins of Believers in their own Perſons; for this would be no other than to puniſh them twice for the ſame Offence, once in their ſurety, and again in themſelves.

Now what abundant cauſe of Comfort may this be to all true Believers, that God's Juſtice as well as his Mercy ſhall acquit them: That that Attribute of God at the Apprehenſion of which they were wont to tremble, ſhould interpoſe on their behalf, and plead for them. Yet through the All-ſufficient Expiation and Atonement that Chriſt hath made for our ſins, this Myſtery is effected, and Juſtice it ſelf brought over from being a formidable Adverſary to be of our Party and to Plead for us. Therefore the *Apoſtle* tells us, 1 John 1. 9. *That God is Faithful and Juſt to forgive us our ſins.* And St. *Paul*, 2 Theſſal. 1. 6, 7. *It is a Righteous thing with God to recompence Tribulation to them that trouble you. And to you who are troubled, reſt with us, when the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſhall be revealed from Heaven with his Mighty Angels.*

Fourthly, When God pardons, he doth no longer account of us as ſinners. Indeed after Pardon, we ſtill retain ſinful and corrupt Natures, and there is that Original Pollution in us that can never be totally diſlodged in this Life. But yet when God pardons, he looks not upon us as Sinners, but as Juſt. The *Malefactor* that is legally diſcharged, either by ſatisfying the Law, or by his Princes Grace and Favour towards him, is no more reputed a *Malefactor*, but as Juſt and Righteous as if he had never offended. So is it with us, we are both ways diſcharged of our guilt; both by ſatisfying the penalty of the Law in Chriſt our Surety; and by the Free Grace and Mercy of God, who hath Sealed to us a Gracious Act of Pardon, and therefore we are Juſt in the ſight of God as if we had never ſinned.

Fifthly, Pardon of ſin is one great part of our Juſtification. Juſtification conſiſts of theſe two parts, Remiſſion, and Acceptance: We have them both joyned together, *Epheſ.* 1. 6, 7. *He hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have Redemption through his Blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins.* Remiſſion of ſins takes away our liableneſs to Death, Acceptation of our perſons gives us a Title unto Life. Now to be free from our obnoxiouſneſs to Death, and inſtated in a Right to Eternal Life; theſe two Conſtitute a perfect Juſtification. For to be accepted of God in Chriſt, is no other than for God through the Righteouſneſs and Obedience of Chriſt imputed to us, to own and acknowledge us to have a Right to Heaven. And therefore we have mention of Pardon and an Inheritance together, in St. *Paul's* Commiſſion to his Miniſtery, *Acts* 26. 18. *That they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and an Inheritance among them that are Sanctified.*

It is not therefore, *O Soul*, a bare negative Righteouſneſs that God intends thee in the Pardon of thy ſins; it is not meerly to remove the Curſe and Wrath thy ſins have deſerved (though that alone can never ſufficiently be admired) but the ſame hand that plucks thee out of Hell by Pardon, lifts thee up to Heaven by what he gives thee together with thy Pardon, even a Right and Title to a Bleſſed and Glorious Inheritance. Thy Pardon thou haſt from the Paſſive Obedience of Chriſt in his Sufferings. A Right to Heaven thou haſt through the Active Obedience of Chriſt in fulfilling all Righteouſneſs. And through both haſt thou obtained a compleat Juſtification: God looking upon thee as Innocent through the Satisfaction of his Son, and as Worthy through his Obedience, both which are made thine by Faith.

Now this Pardon of ſin is in *Scripture* ſet forth by very ſweet and full Expreſſions. It is called, *a blotting out of Tranſgreſſion.* A *Metaphor* taken from a Creditors croſſing the

the Debt-Book, ſignifying thereby a diſcharge of the Debt. And leſt, we might poſſibly fear God will implead us for them without Book, the *Prophet* adds *forgetting* unto *blotting out*, Eſai. 43. 25. *I even I am he that bloteth out thy Tranſgreſſions for my Names ſake, and I will not remember thy ſins.* It is called, a covering of our ſins. *Pſal.* 32. 1. *Bleſſed is the Man whoſe Tranſgreſſions are forgiven, and whoſe ſin is covered.* Yea, we have a further ground of Comfort, for it is not only a covering of our ſins, but it is a covering of God's Face from them. *Pſal.* 51. 9. *Hide thy Face from my ſins, and blot out all mine iniquities.* It is a caſting of them behind God's back as a thing that he will never more regard. *Iſ.* 38. 17. *Thou haſt caſt all my ſins behind thy back.* And leſt we ſhould ſuſpect he ſhould turn again to behold them, it is called, *a caſting of them into the bottom of Sea*, Mic. 7. 19. as we do with things we would have irrecoverably loſt and gone. *It is a ſcattering them as a thick Cloud*, Eſai. 44. 22. When the Vapours of it are ſo diſſipated, that there ſhall not remain the leaſt ſpot, to obſtruct the ſhining of God's Face and Favour upon our Souls. Yea, and ſo perfect an Abolition ſhall be made of all our Iniquities, that though Divine Juſtice ſhould enter into a ſtrict ſearch and ſcrutiny after them, they ſhall not be found againſt us. So the Prophet *Jeremiah* tells us, *Jerem.* 50. 20. *In that day ſhall the iniquity of Iſrael be ſought for, and there ſhall be none; and the ſins of Judah, and they ſhall not be found.* How hath God heaped up Expreſſions of his Grace and Mercy one upon another? and ſtudied words as it were to aſſure us of the Validity of our Pardon, giving to us abounding Conſolations as our ſins have been abounding. And thus much ſhall ſuffice to ſhew the Nature of Pardoning Grace and Mercy, as expreſſed in theſe words, *Forgive us our Debts.*

Secondly, Let us conſider unto whom this Petition for Pardon is directed, and that is as all the reſt are, to our Fa-

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ther; whoſe Laws we have violated, whoſe Juſtice we have offended, whoſe diſpleaſure we have incurred, and to whoſe vengeance we have made our ſelves liable and obnoxious, to him we ſue for Pardon and Remiſſion.

Hence we may collect this note: *That it is the High Prerogative of God alone to forgive Sins.*

God aſſumes this particularly to himſelf, and ſeems to triumph in the Glory of this Attribute. *I even I am he that blotteth out thy Tranſgreſſions.* And therefore when Chriſt cured the *Paralytick*, the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* ſtorm'd at him for a *Blaſphemer*, for ſaying, *Be of good chear, thy Sins are forgiven thee*: *Thou Blaſphemeſt*, ſay they, *for who can forgive Sins but God alone?* Mark 2. 7. And this Charge of *Blaſphemy* which they laid againſt Chriſt, had he not been the true God, had been unanſwerable: And therefore our Saviour denies not their Principle, which is moſt certain and infallible; but to convince them that they themſelves were Blaſphemers, in applying it to him, proves his *Deity* by a *Miracle*, and demonſtrates his Authority to forgive Sins, by his Power in healing Diſeaſes.

But you will ſay, if it be the incommunicable Prerogative of God only to forgive Sins, How is it that we find this Privilege and Power, aſcribed unto Men alſo, *John* 20. 23. *Whoſoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted.* It ſeems therefore that the *Apoſtles* and Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, their Succeſſors, ſtand inveſted by Chriſt with a Power to forgive Sins.

I *Anſwer*, Remiſſion of Sins is two-fold, either Authoritatively and Judicially; or, Secondly, Miniſterial and Declarative: The former belongs only to God, who by the meer Authority of his Grace and Mercy doth freely and fully acquit us of our Guilt, without requiring any thing at our Hands, by way of recompence or puniſhment. Now for any Creature, either in Heaven or Earth, to aſſume this to himſelf, is a moſt infolent and *Blaſphemous Pride*; which

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while the *Pope* of *Rome* doth, he hath given us the strongest Argument that can be, to assert and prove him to be the *Antichrist*, and that Son of *Perdition*; for among the many Characters that are given of *Antichrist*, all of which do more than sufficiently belong unto him, this is one, *that he exalteth himself above all that is called God*, 2 Thessal. 2. 4.

Not only above Titular Gods, as *Kings* and *Magistrates* are, (for it is notoriously known what Power he arrogates unto himself in disposing Crowns, and transferring States, making *Princes* themselves far more inferiour to him, than their Subjects are to them;) but also above the only Living and True God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, in pretending to a Judicial Authority to forgive Sins and Offences committed against God: For it is clear and evident, whosoever can Pardon the Offences of one Person against another must himself be Superiour to both, and have Authority and Jurisdiction over both; but chiefly over the Person offended to make him cease the Prosecution of his Right, and sit down by the Wrong received: For if a *Prince* should Pardon the Injury that one *Subject* doth the other, he must command the Person grieved not to molest or prosecute him that hath done the Wrong, and so disable him from taking revenge. Now what a wretched and damnable Insolence is it for any vile sinful Man to pretend to such a Power of forgiving Sins committed against God, as if by his Authority he could command God to surcease his Suit, and to require no farther recompence, but to rest himself contented that it is the *Pope's* Will and Pleasure to have it so? What is this but to exalt himself above all that is called God, not only on Earth, but in Heaven it self? A most horrid Blasphemy, and so proper a Character of *Antichrist*, that there needs no other to describe him by.

Secondly, There is a Ministerial declarative Remission of Sins; and this is either Internal in the Court of Conscience, or External in the Court of the Church of Christ here

here upon Earth. The former Remiſſion is the Office or Miniſtery of the *Holy Ghoſt* ſealing of us up unto the *Day* of *Redemption*, by his ſilent and moſt comfortable Teſtimony, witneſſing unto us that our Sins are pardoned, and our Perſons accepted. The External Declaration of Remiſſion of Sins, is an open publication to all humble Penitent Sinners the Abſolution and Pardon of their Offences, according to the tenor of God's Faithful Promiſes. And in this ſence alone, the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt have power to pardon and remit Sins, *Whoſe Sins ye remit they are remitted*; that is, whoſe Sins you declare that God hath remitted, they are remitted, not abſolutely but conditionally, in caſe Men come up to the performance of thoſe conditions, upon which God hath promiſed Pardon and Forgiveneſs, which are Faith and Repentance. And therefore in our *Publick Prayers*, where the whole Congregation hath made an humble Confeſſion of their Sins, the Miniſter according to his Office and Power given him by Chriſt, declares to them, *That God Pardons and Abſolves all them that truly Repent, and unfeignedly believe his Holy Goſpel*: Or, if on any other Occaſion the Miniſter ſay, *I Abſolve thee from thy Sins*; yet the meaning is the ſame, he abſolves him Officially not Judicially; he Abſolves by declaring him Abſolved and Pardoned upon his ſincere Faith and Repentance; which if People did but better underſtand, they would not be ſo forward to carp at, leaſt they carp at the very Goſpel it ſelf.

Nor doth this at all intrench upon God's Prerogative; for the Miniſter, only as the Officer and Meſſenger of God, declares that it is he alone who Pardons and Abſolves Penitent Sinners. A Practice as far from bordering upon the intolerable Arrogance of *Antichriſt*; as it is on the other ſide from yielding enough to the expreſs Authority of Chriſt to adjudge it vain and fruitleſs. As it is the *Prince* that Pardons, the *Herald* only proclaims it: So here, it is God only

only who Pardons Sinners, the Miniſter's part is in a ſolemn and official manner to Pronounce and Proclaim this Pardon, to all that ſhall accept it upon the Terms on which it is offered by God. And this may ſuffice in Anſwer to that *Objection.*

But then again it may be *Objected*, How is it God alone who forgives Sins, whereas we likewiſe are bound to forgive thoſe that Treſpaſs againſt us.

To this I Anſwer, Every Treſpaſs againſt Man is alſo an Offence againſt God; for ſo merciful is our God unto us, that he hath taken his Creatures under the Protection of his Law, and fenced us round with the Authority of his Commands, ſo that no injury can reach us, but it muſt commit a Treſpaſs upon the Divine Law, and break through thoſe bounds that God hath ſet about every Man's Propriety and Right to defend it againſt unjuſt Invaders: But yet if any ſhall dare to violate this, we muſt forgive them ſo far forth as it is a wrong to us, (as I ſhall ſhew more largely hereafter;) but we cannot pretend to forgive the wrong that they have done to God in wronging us; but this muſt be left between him and their own Souls; to his Mercy and their Repentance.

If then it be the Prerogative of God alone to pardon Sin, hence we may for our abundant Comfort be informed,

Firſt, That our Pardon is free and gratuitous; for whatſoever God doth he doth it freely, for his own ſake, without reſpect to any former deſerts, or expectations of any future recompence. It is infinitely below the Sovereignty of his Grace to admit of any other motive for his Mercy, but his Mercy. And therefore he hath told us, *I will be Gracious to whom I will be Gracious, and I will ſhew Mercy to whom I will ſhew Mercy*, Exod. 33. 19. Since it is a God that Pardons, it is infinitely unworthy of his Glory and Majeſty to ſell his Pardons and Indulgencies, and to make his Mercy Merchandiſe.

But yet this pardoning Grace of God, though it be free in reſpect of Purchace, yet is it limited to Conditions in reſpect of Application; which Conditions are Faith and Repentance. *Whoſoever believes in him ſhall obtain remiſſion of Sins*, Acts 10. 43. *Repent*, ſays the Apoſtle, *that your Sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreſhing ſhall come*, Acts 3. 19. Think not therefore, *O Soul*, when thy Conſcience is oppreſſed with the Guilt of Sin, think not what Expiation thou muſt make, what Ranſom thou muſt pay to God; ſay not, *Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord, or bow my ſelf before the High God? Shall I come before him with Burnt-Offerings, with Calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of Rams, or with ten thouſand Rivers of Oil? Shall I give my Firſt-Born for my Tranſgreſſion, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul?* as the *Prophet* ſpeaks, *Micah* 6. 6, 7. What ſhall I do, or what ſhall I offer to make amends and recompence for my Offences? This is to be injurious to the free Grace of God, which requires no ſatisfaction from thee; only thy preſent Acceptance and future Reformation. This is that indeed which God requires from thee; but to think to purchaſe his Favour, and to buy his Mercy, is infinitely to diſparage it. And they only judge rightly of it, who judge it invaluable.

Secondly, It is God that Pardons; therefore our Pardon is full and compleat. Indeed thoſe Acts that God works within us are in this Life imperfect. The Illumination of our Minds, the Sanctification of our Hearts, are God's Works within us; and theſe are defective, not as they come from God, but as they are received in us: As we know but in part ſo we are ſanctified but in part. But thoſe Acts of God, that he doth not work in us, but only terminate upon us, of which we are the *Objects*, but not the *Subjects*, they are all as perfect here as they ſhall be to all Eternity: Thus God Juſtifies, Adopts, and Pardons fully and compleatly;

pleatly; for theſe are Acts of God reſiding in his own Breaſt, where they meet with no oppoſition or allay; nor do they increaſe by any ſmall Degrees as our Sanctification doth; but are at once as perfect as ever they ſhall be. I do not mean, (though ſome have ſo thought and taught,) that God doth at once Pardon all the Sins of a true Believer, as well thoſe which for the future he ſhall commit, as thoſe which he hath already committed, which is an abſurd and dangerous Tenet; as if Sin could be pardoned before it were, or guilt removed before it be contracted. But only whatſoever Sins God pardons, he doth it not gradually. Nothing of guilt is left upon the Soul when God Pardons it, though ſtill there be ſomething of filth left in it when God Sanctifies it. And therefore, as it is the great grief of God's Children, that their inherent Holineſs is ſo imperfect, affronted by Temptations, foiled by Corruptions, oppreſſed and almoſt ſtifled to Death by a Body of Sin that lies heavy upon it; yet this on the other Hand may be their exceeding great comfort and rejoicing, that God's pardoning Grace is not as his ſanctifying Grace is, nor granted to them by the ſame ſtint and meaſure. A Sin truly repented of, is not pardoned to us by halfs, half the guilt remitted and half retained, (as the *Papiſts* fanſie to eſtabliſh their *Purgatory*:) No, O Sinner, there is not any guilt left for thee to ſatisfie for, not any reſerve of puniſhment for thee to undergo; but all thy Sins are ſo pardoned, that they are in God's Account as if they had never been committed againſt him. And therefore be thy Comforts never ſo ſtrong and flowing, and thy ſenſe of God's pardoning Grace never ſo clear; yet know that thy Pardon is ſtill infinitely more perfect than thy Joy in it can be ſatisfactory: For Aſſurance, and the ſenſe of Pardon, is a Work of God's Spirit wrought in us, and is commonly mixed with ſome heſitation and miſgiving doubts; but our Pardon is an Act of God in himſelf, where it meets with nothing contrary; and therefore with

no abatement; but is as perfect and abſolute as ever it ſhall be in Heaven it ſelf.

Thirdly, Is it God that Pardons? Then for thy comfort know, that he can as eaſily forgive great and many Sins, as few and ſmall: For the greatneſs and multitudes of thy Sins can make no odds in infinite Grace and Mercy, only repent and believe. God proclaims his Name, *Exod.* 34 7. *The Lord God Merciful and Gracious, Long-ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs and Truth, forgiving Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion, and Sin*: That is, all ſorts and ſizes of Sins. The greateſt Sins repented of, are no more, without the extent of his Mercy, than the leaſt unrepented of are without the cognizance of his Juſtice. And that there is any one, (though but one) Sin unpardonable, ariſeth not ſo much from the atrociouſneſs of the Fact, as if it exceeded Mercy; but only from the malignity of its Nature, hardning the Heart againſt God, and making it uncapable of Repentance; otherwiſe could they who commit this Sin repent, even they alſo ſhould obtain Pardon. Say not therefore, *Mine Iniquity is greater than can be forgiven*: I have out-ſinn'd Mercy, and there is no Portion for me in God, his fiery Indignation will eternally devour me. This is to be injurious unto God, and to ſtint that Grace and Mercy which he hath made infinite: And thou may'ſt with as much Truth and Reaſon ſay, that thou art greater than God, as that thy Sins are greater than his Mercy.

Yet here, before I leave this, let me caution you that you do not abuſe this comfortable Doctrine of God's pardoning Sin, and turn that into *Preſumption* that was intended only to arm you againſt *Deſpair*. Indeed both *Preſumption* and *Deſpair* tend, in a divers manner, to encourage and harden Men in Sin: The *Deſpairing Sinner* argues, If I muſt not be ſaved, if my Sins be ſo many and great that there is no Pardon for them, to what purpoſe then ſhould I live ſtrictly? To what purpoſe ſhould I croſs and vex my ſelf by an un-

unprofitable ſeverity? It is too great niceneſs to ſcruple farther ſinning, when I am already ſure of *Damnation*; and therefore if I muſt go to *Hell*, I will make my way thither as pleaſant as I can. This is a kind of *Deſpair* that produceth, not horrour, as it doth in ſome, but a moſt wretched careleſsneſs what becomes of them.

On the other hand *Preſumptuous Men* argue, God is able to pardon the greateſt and vileſt Sinners; they cannot ſin beyond the reach and extent of his Grace and Mercy; and therefore what need they yet trouble themſelves to repent and reform, they will yet indulge themſelves a little longer in their Sins; for it is as eaſie for God to pardon them at the laſt moment of their lives, as upon many years preparation.

We ſee Iniquity every where moſt fearfully to abound in the World, and doubtleſs both *Deſpair* and *Preſumption* have too great an influence both upon the Minds and Lives of Men, to make them careleſs in their Eternal Concernments.

Enough hath been ſpoken to the *Deſpairing*, which are but few; but to the *Preſumptuous* let me add a Word. It is the moſt unworthy and diſ-ingenuous uſe they can make of the Mercy of God to preſs it to ſerve againſt its Authority: *Shall we continue in Sin that Grace may abound, God forbid*? Shall we Sin licentiouſly, becauſe God pardons freely? no, the Grace of God obligeth otherwiſe, the Love of Chriſt conſtraineth otherwiſe; the filial diſpoſition of the New Creature enclineth otherwiſe. Gratitude and Retribution engage otherwiſe. But if theſe motives be too refined and ingenious for thy ſordid and ſlaviſh Spirit; and if thou wilt ſtill go on in the *Preſumption of thy Heart, crying Peace, Peace to thy ſelf*; although thou continueſt, *adding one Iniquity to another*, know, O vile wretch, *that the Lord will not ſpare thee, but the Anger of the Lord and his Jealouſie ſhall ſmoak againſt thee; and all the Curſes that*

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are written in his Book ſhall come upon thee, and the Lord will blot out thy Name from under Heaven, Deutr. 29. 19.

And thus I have done with the general conſideration of God's pardoning Sin, held forth to us in this *Petition*: *Forgive us our Debts or Treſpaſſes.*

Now in this *Petition* we pray not only for the Pardon of Sin; but likewiſe for all things that are antecedently neceſſary to obtain it: As,

Firſt, We pray that God would diſcover to us the horrid odious Nature of Sin; that he would convince us of the woful miſerable Eſtate that we are in by Nature; and how much more wretched and miſerable we have made our ſelves by our ſinful lives; that he would ſet home the terrours of Sin upon our Conſciences to our humiliation, and make us Deſpair in our ſelves, that we might fly unto Chriſt, and lay hold on that help and refuge he hath ſet before us.

Secondly, We pray that God would humble us under the ſight and ſenſe of our manifold Tranſgreſſions, that as our Sins have made us vile in God's Eyes, ſo they may make us vile in our own, to loath our ſelves in duſt and aſhes for them.

Thirdly, We pray that God would give us his Spirit to enable us to confeſs our Sins cordially, and ſincerely to pour forth our Hearts before him, and to acknowledge our manifold Provocations with ſhame and godly ſorrow, upon which God promiſed to grant us pardon and forgiveneſs, *Prov.* 28. 13. *He that covereth his Sin ſhall not proſper; but he that confeſſeth and forſaketh them ſhall find Mercy.* And the *Apoſtle* tells us, *If we confeſs our Sins, God is Faithful and Juſt to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanſe us from all Unrighteouſneſs*, 1 Joh. 1. 9.

Fourth-

Fourthly, We beg a more clear underſtanding of the Sacrifice and Atonement made by Jeſus Chriſt, through which alone all Pardon is purchaſed and procured: To know both what it is and why ordained; and likewiſe the knowledge of God's rich and free Mercy, and the Conjunction of this Sacrifice and Mercy together, in the great Myſtery of the freeneſs of Divine Grace, and the Satisfaction of Jeſus concurring to the Remiſſion of our ſins, and the Salvation of our Souls.

Fifthly, We pray that we may have a high eſteem of Chriſt, and may hunger and thirſt more after him and his Righteouſneſs, through whom alone Pardon of our ſins is to be obtained.

Sixthly and laſtly, We pray that we may be brought over to cloſe with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt by a lively Faith; that his Righteouſneſs thereby may be made ours, and we by that Righteouſneſs may obtain Pardon of our ſins, and an Inheritance among them that are Sanctified. For though Pardon be procured by the Death of Chriſt, yet the Application of it to the Soul, is only by Faith, uniting us unto him, and making us one with him. For all that Chriſt hath either done or ſuffered for the Redemption of the World, would be altogether in vain as to our particular benefit and advantage, were it not that Faith entitles us unto it, and makes that ſatisfaction which he hath given to Divine Juſtice to be *Myſtically* our Act, as it was *Perſonally* his.

And thus I have conſidered the Petition it ſelf, *Forgive us our Debts.*

I now proceed to the Condition or Plea annexed. *As we forgive our Debtors.* And here we have,

Firſt, the Act, *Forgive.*

Secondly, The Object, *Debtors.*

Thirdly, The limitation of this Object, *our Debtors.*

Fourthly, The proportion or reſemblance, in the Particle *as*: *As we forgive our Debtors.*

I ſhall begin with the Object, *Debtors*. As all Men ſtand indebted to God in a Two-fold *Debt*; a *Debt* of Obedience, and a *Debt* of Puniſhment: So one Man may be a *Debtor* to another two ways; either by owing to him a *Debt* of Duty, or elſe a *Debt* of Satisfaction.

Firſt, Some Men ſtand indebted to others in a *Debt* of Duty. And indeed I might well have ſaid, this *Debt* is reciprocal between Man and Man. Thus *Children*, owe *Parents* Reverence and Obedience, and *Parents* their *Children* Proviſion and Education. *Subjects* owe their *Magiſtrates* Honour and Tribute, and *Magiſtrates* owe their *Subjects* Juſtice and Protection. *Servants* owe their *Maſters* Fear, Diligence and Faithfulneſs; and *Maſters* owe their *Servants* Maintenance and Encouragement. And generally all Men owe one another, Love, Reſpect and Kindneſs.

Now theſe *Debts* cannot balance one another, that as much as is left unpaid me by any perſon; ſo much again I may refuſe to pay him. If a *Father* pay not his *Debt* to his *Child*, or a *Magiſtrate* to his *Subject*, or a *Maſter* to his *Servants*, they are not hereby acquitted of their Obligations, but ſtill Duty, Obedience and Faithfulneſs is required from *Inferiours* to their *Superiours*: And ſo on the contrary, Love, Protection and Maintenance is required from *Superiours* to their *Inferiours*, although peccant, as long as the Relation ſhall continue between them: And the reaſon is, becauſe we are bound to theſe Duties, not only by the Obligations that mutual Offices lay upon us, but by God's expreſs Will and Command, and the performance of the Relations that is betwixt us. And therefore, though it be Lawful for two Perſons that owe one another an equal *Debt* of Money, or other ſuch like things, to croſs out one *Debt* by the other, and ſo diſcount it betweem them: Yet it is not ſo where the Duties that God requires are the *Debts* they owe to each other: for although others may fail in the performance of what belongs to their part, yet thou oughteſt not

to

to fail in thine; for thus to be even with Men, is to run in *Debt* with God, and to make him thy *Creditor*, who will certainly be thy *Revenger*.

And from hence it appears that this is not the *Debt* that we are to forgive our *Debtors*, for we have no power to releaſe them from their Obligation to Duty, whilſt the Relation between us continues, no more than we have to reſcind the Laws of God and of Nature.

Secondly, Some Men may ſtand indebted to others in a *Debt* of Satisfaction, as they owe them reparation on good grounds for wrongs and injuries done againſt them, and this is the *Debt* which we are to forgive others.

Now as wrongs and injuries are of divers ſorts, ſo many divers ways may others become *Debtors* to us.

And they are chiefly theſe *Six* that follow:

Firſt, By wronging us in our perſons, either by unjuſt Violence, or by unjuſt Reſtraints. Thus the Perſecuting *Jews* were *Debtors* to the *Apoſtles* and *Diſciples* of Chriſt, for often *Scourging* and *Impriſonieg* them.

Secondly, By wronging us in our Place and Dignity, and in the Office, to which by God's Providence we are called. And ſo alſo thoſe that vilifie the perſons, and detract from the Authority of thoſe that are ſet over them, become their *Debtors*. Thus *Aaron* and *Miriam* were *Debtors* unto *Moſes*, for traducing the Authority that God had committed unto him, *Numb.* 12. 2.

Thirdly, By wronging us in our Friends and Relations, either by corrupting them. Thus *Sechem* became a *Debtor* to *Jacob* and his *Sons*, for violating his *Daughter* and their *Siſter*. Or elſe by deſtroying them: So *Herod* to the *Bethlemitiſh* Mothers by murdering their Children.

Fourthly, By wronging us in our Right and Title, withholding from us what is our due.

Fifthly, In our Poſſeſſions, when either by Force or Fraud they take from us what of Right belongs to us.

Sixthly, And laſtly, in our Reputation and good Name, unjuſtly defaming us for thoſe Crimes which only their Malice hath invented and publiſhed againſt us.

To all theſe wrongs we are ſubject, God permitting the wickedneſs of Men, a large ſcope to vent it ſelf, and affording us a large field to Exerciſe our meekneſs and forgiving temper in each of theſe.

But withal, if thoſe who in any of theſe, or any other particulars do wrong their Brethren, are by the Sentence of our Saviour here pronounced *Debtors*, this ſhould teach them to look upon themſelves as obliged to make ſatisfaction according to the utmoſt of their Power and Ability.

Thou therefore who art Conſcious to thy ſelf of wronging any either in their Perſons, or Dignities, or Relations, or Rights, or Poſſeſſions, or Reputations: Though it be thy Duty to confeſs it before God, and humble thy ſelf to him for it, begging Mercy and Pardon at his hands: Yet this is not enough; for by one ſingle offence thou haſt contracted a *double Debt*; thou ſtandeſt *indebted* to the Juſtice of God for the Violation of his Law. But this is not all, but thou ſtandeſt in *Debt* unto Man likewiſe, by injuries done againſt him, and both thy *Creditors* muſt be ſatisfied: God, by the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt through thy Faith and Repentance; and Man by an Acknowledgment, Reparation and Reſtitution. The *Apoſtle* hath commanded us, *Rom.* 13. 8. *To owe no Man any thing, but to love one another.* And indeed Satisfaction for Wrongs is a neceſſary part of Repentance; for he that truly Repents, doth really and from his heart wiſh that the Wrong had never been done, and therefore will be ſure to do his utmoſt to annihiliate the fault, by giving the abuſed Party a compenſation fully anſwerable to the injury, and to the utmoſt of his Ability, reſtore him into the ſame or a better Condition than that in which he was before he received the Wrong. Therefore,

First,

First, Art thou Conſcious to thy ſelf that thou haſt wronged any Man in his Credit and Reputation, either by raiſing or divulging falſe and ſlanderous Reports: know that thou art his *Debtor*, and Juſtice obligeth thee to make him ſatisfaction for that injury, by wiping away thoſe aſperſions, and licking away the dirt with the ſame Tongue with which thou didſt beſpatter him: for if thou ſuffereſt the ſame Reports to run on which thou haſt ſet on foot, all that ſhall relate them after thee, multiply thy guilt; and all the numerous Off-ſpring of Lyes, which (through a certain itch that Men have of ſpeaking ill) will be ſoon propagated, ſhall all be charged upon thee; for of them all, thou and the *Devil* art the Father.

2ly, Art thou Conſcious thou haſt wronged thy Superiours, as *Magiſtrates*, *Miniſters*, *Parents*, or *Maſters*, in that Authority and Power that God hath given them over thee, by any diſobedient demeanour towards them: know that thou art their *Debtor*, and it lies upon thy Conſcience to give them due ſatisfaction; which becauſe it cannot be done by recalling the Offences paſt, it muſt be done by an humble acknowledgment to them, deſiring their Pardon, and promiſing and endeavouring more ready ſubmiſſion for the future. So was the Caſe of *Aaron* and *Miriam* when they had affronted *Moſes*, and were convinced of the wrong they had done him: *Aaron* makes his humble acknowledgment and begs forgiveneſs, *Numb.* 12. 11. *Alas my Lord, I beſeech thee lay not this ſin upon us, wherein we have done fooliſhly, and wherein we have ſinned.* And ſo the *Prodigal* when he returned to his *Father*, confeſſed his diſobedience, *Luke* 15. 21. *Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven and in thy ſight, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son.* Which though it be a *Parable*, yet teacheth us real and literal Duties in parallel caſes.

Thirdly, Art thou Conſcious to thy ſelf, that thou haſt wronged any one in their Right, either in with-holding or

taking from them what in Law and Equity belonged to them? thou art their *Debtor*, and as ſuch art bound to make them ſatisfaction by making them a full and plenary Reſtitution; and that though the thing wherein thou haſt wronged them be great or ſmall, more or leſs; yea though it ſhould ſeemingly tend to the loſs of thy Credit to acknowledge ſuch a wrong, or viſibly tend to thy impoveriſhing and undoing to reſtore it. Nor is it enough when thy Conſcience checks thee for it, that thou confeſs the ſin to God, and prayeſt for Pardon at his hands; but it behooveth thee to render unto Man what is his, and what thou unjuſtly keepeſt from him, whether it be his by thy Promiſe and Engagement, or by his former Title and Poſſeſſion. As thou loveſt thy Soul, and hopeſt for Pardon and Salvation, thou muſt make Reſtitution; and the reaſon is, becauſe as long as thou detaineſt it, ſo long thou continueſt in the Commiſſion of the ſame ſin, for an unjuſt detainure and poſſeſſion is a continued and prolonged Theft: And certainly our Repentance be it what it will, can never be true and ſincere while we continue in the ſin we ſeem to repent of, and this Repentance not being true, Pardon ſhall never be granted thee, but as thou remaineſt a *Debtor* to Man, ſo thy *Debt* to God remains uncancell'd; and though Men may not ſue thee to recover their Right, becauſe this ſin ſometimes is ſo ſecretly carried on, that it may not come to their knowledge, yet Divine Juſtice will ſue thee for it, and purſue thee to Eternal Condemnation.

But you may ſay, What if thoſe whom we have wronged, be ſince dead? how can any Reſtitution be made to them, or any Recompence reach them.

I *Anſwer*; In this caſe, thou art bound to find out their Children or Relations in whom they ſtill live, and to whom it is to be ſuppoſed, that which thou haſt detained, ſhould have deſcended, and to reſtore it unto them, with ample ſatisfaction likewiſe for all the prejudice they have ſuſtained in the mean time for want of it. But

But in caſe none can be found to whom of Right it may belong, then God's Right takes place, as he is the *Univerſal Proprietor* of all things, and thou oughteſt beſides what thou art obliged to give of thine own, to beſtow it in Works of *Charity* and *Piety*, which may promote his Glory, ſtill bewailing that thou haſt ſo long deferred the Reſtitution of it to the immediate Owners, till thou haſt made thy ſelf now incapable of doing it.

This perhaps will ſeem a very hard Leſſon to many; and doubtleſs it is ſo to a World ſo full of Rapine and Injuſtice: But I cannot, I dare not make God's Commands lighter nor eaſier than he hath made them: And let this ſeem as hard as it will, yet this is the Rule of Chriſtianity, this is the inflexible Law of Juſtice, and without obſerving it, you keep your ſelves from all hopes of obtaining Pardon by continuing in your ſin, which is utterly inconſiſtent with Repentance, and without Repentance there can be no Remiſſion nor Salvation.

And thus much for the word *Debtors*, and what it intimates to us; namely, that we are bound to make ſatisfaction for all the wrongs and injuries we have done to any others.

But then as there lies this *Debt* on the part of the *Debtor*, ſo doth there likewiſe one great and important Duty on the part of the *Creditor*, and that is forgiveneſs: *As we forgive our Debtors.* Now all pardon and forgiveneſs is a removing of the liableneſs unto puniſhment under which we formerly lay: And therefore as when God pardons, he frees us from the puniſhment due to our offences; ſo when we pardon and forgive others, it muſt be by a meek forbearing to puniſh others who have offended us. And this conſiſts in two things.

Firſt, In abſtaining from the outward Acts of private and perſonal Revenge, whether by word, or by deed; for both are expreſly forbidden us. If others have bent their

Tongues

Tongues againſt us, and *ſhot forth their Arrows even cruel words*; Chriſtianity obligeth us not to return them back again, much leſs, (as is the common but wicked practice of the moſt) with double meaſure and advantage: for if they have wronged us by their actions, as well as by their ſpeeches, we may not aſſume to our ſelves a liberty of Retribution, nor think that the iniquity of their proceeding, will juſtifie the Equity of ours: for both of theſe, ſee what the *Apoſtle* ſaith, 1 *Pet.* 3. 9. *Be pitiful, be courteous, not rendring evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrarywiſe bleſſing, knowing that you are thereunto called that you ſhould inherit a bleſſing.* And indeed there is nothing that the Goſpel and Laws of Chriſt do more inſtantly preſs upon us, than that we would not requite injuries with injuries: This prohibition is the proper Character of his *Doctrine*, and this the practice of his *Diſciples*. Revenge is a wild untam'd paſſion that knows no bounds nor meaſures. And if we were permitted to carve it out for our ſelves, we ſhould certainly exceed all limits and moderation: for ſelf-love which is an immoderate affection, would be made the whole Rule of our vengeance: And becauſe we love our ſelves abundantly too well, we ſhould revenge every imaginary wrong done us with too much bitterneſs and ſeverity: And therefore God would not truſt the righting of our ſelves in our own hands, knowing we would be too partial to our own intereſt and concerns; but hath aſſumed it to himſelf as the Prerogative of his own Crown. *Rom.* 12. 19. *Dearly beloved, avenge not your ſelves, but rather give place unto Wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay ſaith the Lord.*

But you will ſay, How then, muſt we ſit down under every petulant wrong that is done us, and by a ſtupid Patience invite injuries, and tempt others to the ſport and recreation of abuſing us; for every one will be ready to ſhoot his Arrows againſt a ſoft Butt, where they will ſtick; but who will care to ſhoot

ſhoot them againſt a Stone-wall, that will rebound them back in their Faces again?

I Anſwer, It is indeed well worth the moſt ſerious and critical conſideration, rightly to ſtate how far we are bound to forgive Injuries and Wrongs, without requiring any ſatisfaction for them. And becauſe the reſolution of this ſeems to be of great difficulty, as alſo of great importance for the regulating of our Conſciences, I ſhall firſt lay down ſome Diſtinctions, and then ſome Concluſions drawn from them for our more full ſatisfaction in this caſe.

Firſt, Thoſe Wrongs that are done thee, may either be forgiven by thee or without doing any wrong to others, or not.

Secondly, Thoſe Wrongs which thou may'ſt forgive without doing any wrong to any other, are either light and tolerable Offences, or of great concern and conſequence. Now theſe Diſtinctions being premiſed, I ſay,

Firſt, In no Caſe whatſoever, be the injury greater or leſs, is private revenge to be allowed; but ſo far forth art thou bound to forgive it, as not to be both Judge and Executioner thy ſelf. This, I ſuppoſe, is clear and indubitable, that all revenge is to be committed to the *Magiſtrate's Sword*, whom God hath armed with Authority and Commiſſion, to be the *Avenger* to execute Wrath upon them that do evil.

Secondly, Therefore if the wrong thou haſt received be inſupportable, and tends either to the ruine of thy Eſtate and neceſſary ſubſiſtence, or to the irreparable loſs of thy good Name, or it may be of thy Life: I know no precept of forgiveneſs, that doth in this caſe forbid thee to ſeek ſatisfaction; but it muſt be only in a publick and legal way, otherwiſe in forgiving others we ſhould vaſtly injure our ſelves, and ſo pervert the rule which commands us to love our Neighbours as our ſelves, and therefore our ſelves primarily as the ſtandard and meaſure of our love to them. Now if any

any one ſhould attempt to take away that which is neceſſary to my livelihood; or by falſe accuſations ſhould go about to take away my Credit or my Life; certainly I owe ſo much Charity to my ſelf, as to reſiſt him in it, and to require ſatisfaction and recompence for it; but ſtill this muſt be obſerved, that we ought not to right our ſelves according to our own private diſcretion, but by the Sentence of the Law and by the Authority of the Magiſtrate; for the Law is good, ſays the Apoſtle, if it be uſed lawfully. And therefore briefly in our ſeeking for our Right at Law there are theſe three things requiſite to make it a lawful and allowable Action.

Firſt, When that we ſue for, is a matter of moment.

Secondly, When we have to do with obſtinate and ſtubborn Perſons, who will yield to nothing but what they are forced and compell'd to, and will not ſtand to the Award and Arbitration of private Chriſtians.

Thirdly, When we have before-hand uſed all likely and probable means to prevail with thoſe who have done us wrong, to make us neceſſary and fitting ſatisfaction. Theſe Three things muſt always concur to make our ſuing even for publick revenge a thing lawful. And then in all ſuch Proceſſes we muſt be ſure to obſerve theſe Two things.

Firſt, That we have Right on our ſide, or at leaſt be verily perſwaded that we have it, and that the Perſon whom we proſecute doth us wrong. To ſeek for reaſonable ſatisfaction in this caſe, is ſo far from being charged with Rancour and Malice, that it is rather an effect of Love to bring them to do us right, whereby indeed they do greater right to themſelves.

Secondly, We muſt be ſure to maintain Love to them, being willing and ready to do them any kind Offices, whatſoever lies in our power. We muſt therefore ſeek our Right with much meekneſs and compaſſion. And when a Controverſie depends between us and any other, we ſhould not make

make it a matter of ſtrife and variance, but only put it to the deciſion of the Law, to whom the right belongs; and if it be found to belong to the other, and not to thy ſelf, thou oughteſt to be glad that Right is done, and to preſer the intereſt of Juſtice before thine own; otherwiſe thou ſeekeſt Victory and not Equity. And this is the *Second Concluſion*, that for a great important Wrong, thou mayeſt lawfully ſeek for ſatisfaction.

Thirdly, If the Wrong done thee cannot be paſs'd by without the wronging of others, thou mayeſt and oughteſt in this caſe to require ſatisfaction. As for inſtance, the Laws of the Land have ordained Death as the puniſhment of *Robberies and Theft* upon the High-way in the Day, and breaking open of Houſes in the Night; not ſo much for revenge upon the Guilty, as for example to others, and for ſecurity to the Innocent. In this caſe, we ought not to paſs by any who have been deprehended thus unjuſtly invading our Poſſeſſions; eſpecially if we have juſt cauſe to ſuſpect, (as commonly it ſo happens,) that our ſuffering them to eſcape, will but embolden them to farther outrages; for this were a wrong done to the Nation and Community in which we live, and by ſuch an indiſcreet pity and compaſſion we bring upon our ſelves the Guilt of all the Crimes that they afterwards commit.

Fourthly, If the Wrongs that are done thee be tolerable, and thou mayeſt forgive them without wronging of others; the Laws of Chriſtianity oblige thee ſo to do, without ſtanding upon any ſatisfaction and reparation for them. Our Saviour hath given us our Rule in this Caſe, *Matth.* 5. 40. *If any Man will ſue thee at Law and take away thy Coat, let him have thy Cloak alſo*: Which teacheth us that about ſmall matters, things which we may eaſily be without, or eaſily procure, ſuch as a *Cloak* or a *Coat*, we ſhould not be contentious, but rather recede from our Right, than vigorouſly purſue it with ſtrifes and quarrels. And we ought

to be ſo far from ſeeking revenge for ſuch petty Injuries, as are not deſtructive nor greatly prejudicial to us, as to be willing rather to ſuffer a *Second*, than to revenge the *Firſt*.

For if all that can be called our due and our right muſt be exacted to the very utmoſt, what *Debt* is there that we are bound to forgive? Thoſe therefore are juſtly to be condemned that take every advantage againſt their Neighbours, and although the Offence be but trivial, a paſſionate Word, or a ſudden and light Blow, that proceeded not from any propenſe and intended Malice, or the like, preſently purſue ſuch Advantages with rigour and extremity; and becauſe they may do it according to the Law of Man, regard not the Law of God which commands us to forgive ſuch *Debtors*.

And this is the firſt thing wherein forgiveneſs doth conſiſt, in abſtaining from the outward Acts of *Revenge*, and exacting ſatisfaction from thoſe who have wronged us, where we have ſeen how it is limitted, and how to be obſerved.

Secondly, *Forgiving our Debtors* conſiſts in the inward frame and temper of our Hearts towards them, that we bear them no Malice, no Ill-will; but be as much in Charity with them, as though they never had offended us. And this forgiveneſs we are bound always to exerciſe, even in thoſe caſes in which we may ſeek for ſatisfaction; yea, although we could never proſecute them for ſatisfaction; yet if we retain ſecret grudgings and animoſities in our Hearts againſt them, this is not an entire forgiveneſs, and ſuch as will be acceptable to God; for he eſtimates the Heart, and not only the outward Actions which may have many bye ends to ſway and direct them.

And thus I have, as briefly as I could, ſhown you what *forgiving* of our *Debtors* is, and how far we are bound to do it.

And

And now, Christians, I know you cannot but reflect seriously upon it, how hard and difficult a Duty this of forgiveness is. It is that which the whole interest of Flesh and Blood, and all the Party that Passions and Affections can muster up within us will certainly rebel against this Doctrine. And alas, how seldom is it that Men can conquer themselves so as to yield obedience unto it really and cordially! Whence is it that all places are so full of Railing and Reviling, Quarrels and Challenges, vexatious Contentions, and endless Suits, Warrants, Arrests, Actions, and Imprisonments, and that upon slight Injuries and Provocations; but only that they have not learned this necessary Duty, *of forgiving one another*? Nay, many think it the part of a high Spirit and generous Nature to make themselves terrible to those whom they suppose have in the least wronged and affronted them; and upon the least disgust fly out into all extremities of Threatnings and Revenge; whereas in Truth this is but the Effect of a mean and sordid Spirit. It is a Disposition breathed into Men's Souls by the *Devil*, and demonstrates, as a great deal of Pride, so a great deal of Vileness and Baseness: The truest Gallantry and Generousness is to imitate the great God, in being patient and long-suffering, and ready to pardon and forgive. This is that heighth of Spirit, the true *Magnanimity and Greatness*; and if we would be perfect we must stoop; stoop did I say? rather we must aspire to this Heavenly Temper. And to excite unto this, consider,

First, That it is infinitely more honourable to forgive a Wrong than to revenge it: For,

1. First, The one makes thee like to God, the other makes thee like the Devil: Yea, it is the chiefest excellency by which God delights to be set forth. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy Transgressions*, Isai. 43. 25. And *who is a God like unto thee that Pardons Iniquity*? Micah 7. 18. Now how Glorious is it to imitate God in that which he himself

counts his chiefeſt Glory? The Great Ones of the Earth imitate him in Power and Authority, and are ſome kind of glimmering Types of his Majeſty, who daunts and dazles all approachers. But a poor contemptible Chriſtian, whoſe meanneſs lays him open and expoſed to all the Wrongs and Injuries of abuſive and inſulting Wretches, may repreſent a far greater Glory of God, than that wherein *Princes* and *Monarchs* ſhine; even his Forbearance, Pity, Long-ſuffering, and Pardon: He may repreſent God ſitting upon his *Throne of Grace*; whereas the other repreſents him only ſitting upon his *Throne of Power*. Now God never Triumphs more in any Attribute, than that of his Mercy: See with what fair Flouriſhes he writes his Name, *Exod.* 34. 6. *The Lord, the Lord God*; infinite in Power, that ſpreads forth the Heavens and rangeth all the Hoſt of them, that hangs up the Earth in the midſt of the Air, and the whole World in the midſt of a vaſt and boundleſs nothing, that pours out the great Deep and meaſures it in the hollow of his Hand, that rides upon the Wings of the Wind, and makes the Clouds the duſt of his Feet? No, but when he would diſplay himſelf in his greateſt Glory, he doth it in a ſtill Voice, *The Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, Long-ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs and Truth, keeping Mercy for thouſands, forgiving Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion, and Sin.* Now, *O Chriſtian*, by forgiving thoſe who have wronged thee, thou makeſt thy ſelf as a God unto them, and imitateſt him in that wherein he doth chiefly Glory.

Secondly, It is more honourable, becauſe to Pardon is always the Act of a Superiour; it is a Prerogative of Royalty, and highly becomes the *Majeſty* of thoſe whom Chriſt hath made *Kings* as well as *Prieſts*; and certainly they cannot better declare themſelves ſuch, than by iſſuing out Pardons. Think therefore with thy ſelf, *O Chriſtian*, when thou art wronged and affronted, think what an advantage the petu-

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lancies of froward Men do give thee to make thy ſelf their *Superiour*; it is but pardoning them and thou aſcendeſt the Throne. And certainly they can never ſo much Triumph over thee by their Injuries as thou maiſt over them by Forgiveneſs. And ſo much for the Firſt motive.

Secondly, Conſider how many Offences God hath forgiven thee, and this will be an effectual motive to engage thee to forgive others. And here conſider who it is that hath forgiven thee, and what it is he hath forgiven thee.

Firſt, Conſider who it is that hath forgiven thee. And here conſider the infinite diſtance that is between thee and him; he is the Sovereign Lord and Creator of all, in compariſon with whom thou art nothing, yea leſs than nothing. He ſtands in no need of thee, but whether thou live or die, periſh or art ſaved, he is the ſame God, for ever Bleſſed in himſelf. He is able to deſtroy thee every moment, able to breath thee back into thy Duſt, to look thee into Hell and Deſtruction. *They periſh at the rebuke of thy Countenance*, *Pſal.* 80. 16. And yet this high and abſolute Lord, at thy entreaty, freely forgives thee all thy *Debts*, although he might have gotten himſelf a great renown in thy everlaſting Perdition, and might have ſet thee up as a flaming Monument of his Wrath, and inſcribed on thee Victory and Triumph to the Glory of his everlaſting Vengeance. And ſhouldſt not thou then, *O Man*, *O Worm*, forgive thy Fellow-Servant, one of the ſame Mold and Materials with thy ſelf, one to whom perhaps thou art no way Superiour, unleſs that he hath now given thee an opportunity of pardoning him; one who poſſibly may hereafter be helpful unto thee, and in Agreement and Peace with whom thou mayeſt find much Comfort and Good to thy ſelf; ſhouldſt thou not much more forgive him? Certainly God may very well think thee unworthy of his Pardon, who art infinitely his

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Inferiour, if thou canſt not think thoſe worthy of thy Pardon, who in Nature are thy Equals.

Secondly, Conſider the *Wrongs* and *Debts* that God hath forgiven thee, are infinitely greater than thoſe thou art to forgive unto Men: Their Offences againſt thee are but *Pence*; but thine againſt God are *Talents*. And as there is a vaſt diſproportion in the *Nature* of the *Offences*, ſo is there likewiſe in the *Number* of them. The Servant in the *Parable*, whom his Lord forgave, owed him *ten thouſand Talents*; but his Fellow-Servant, whom this Wretch would not forgive, owed him but *an hundred Pence*, Matth. 18. So is it with us, our Sins againſt God, for the greatneſs of them are *Talents*, for the number of them are *ten thouſand*; in every thing we do we wrong the Glory of God, and are continualling offending him: But Men do not always wrong us; or if they did, yet the leaſt of our Offences againſt God is far more hainous, than the greateſt of Men's can be againſt us; we cannot ſpeak of him, nor to him, but that by our unworthy and low Conceptions we revile him far more, than any Man can do us by the moſt ſtudied and bitter invectives. The leaſt irreverend thought of God is a greater injury againſt him, than it would be againſt us if Men ſhould wound or ſtab us. And yet although thy Deeds be as great as *Talents*, and ſo numerous as *many thouſand Talents*, yet thy Lord and Maſter frankly forgave thee all: And this ſhould, by all the obligations of ingenuity, conſtrain thee to forgive thy Fellow-Servant ſo ſmall *Debts* as a *hundred Pence*, when he hath not wherewithal to make thee ſatisfaction. See how our Saviour preſſeth this in the fore-cited place, *Matth.* 18. 32. *I forgave thee all that Debt thou owedſt me, becauſe thou deſiredſt me; and ſhouldſt not thou have had compaſſion on thy Fellow-Servant, as I had pity on thee?* Certainly if ever thou accountedſt the pardoning Grace and Mercy of God ſweet and precious, I will not ſay thou ſhouldſt be glad of Wrongs that thou mighteſt have occaſion

occaſion to pardon them; but yet certainly thou ſhouldſt moſt cordially embrace all ſuch occaſions, if it were but only to recommend the excellency of thy Charity unto others; as Divine Love hath recommend its Fullneſs and Riches to thy deareſt eſteem. And that's the Second. But,

Thirdly, Conſider the binding Particle in the Text, *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.* And now think with thy ſelf, that thou doſt but bind and ſeal the guilt of thy Sins upon thy own Soul, unleſs thou art willing and ready to forgive others. Thou who art revengeful and implacable, inſtead of praying, pronounceſt the moſt direful and dreadful Curſe that can be againſt thy ſelf, and beggeſt of God, no more to forgive thee, than thou doſt forgive thoſe that have offended thee; and ſo thy Prayer is not only turned into Sin, but into a Snare and Curſe, and thou paſſeſt upon thy ſelf the tremendous Sentence of thine own Eternal Damnation; for if thou prayeſt that God would forgive thee as thou forgiveſt others, thou either curſeſt thy ſelf, or elſe thou muſt forgive them.

Now this forgiving of others muſt have theſe Qualifications.

Firſt, It muſt be *unfeigned and cordial from thy very Heart and Soul*, for ſo thou wouldſt have God forgive thee. It is not enough to forbear *outward Revenge*; but thou muſt not harbour in thy Breaſt the leaſt grudge or prejudice againſt them. God forgives ſo as to forget; but if thou keepeſt *Malice* raked up in thy Heart till thou canſt find a fit opportunity to vent it in *Revenges*; how canſt thou but expect that God likewiſe ſhould take his advantage againſt thee, and when it would make moſt for the Glory of his Juſtice, break forth upon thee and exerciſe his vengeance in thy everlaſting Deſtruction.

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Secondly, Thou art obliged likewise to *forgive freely without any Recompence or Satisfaction from others.* If the injury be supportable, we ought not so much as expect or desire Satisfaction; if it be otherwise, and yet the persons offending unable to make *Satisfaction*, we ought to *forgive* them without taking any unmerciful Revenge upon them; which is the wicked custom of many, who will cast their insufficient *Debtors* into Prison, and there let them starve and rot; though by this cruelty they cannot satisfie their *Debt*, but their Malice and Revenge.

Thirdly, We must *forgive others fully and compleatly*, for God doth so. He pardons our sins so fully, that they are in his account as if they had never been committed; and so must we pardon injuries wholly and fully as if there had never been any done us. This the *Apostle* observes towards the *Galatians*, who were a People as injurious to his Ministery and Authority as any could be, and yet he forgives it so fully that he tells them, *Gal.* 4. 12. *Brethren, I beseech you be as I am, for I am as you are, you have not injured me at all.* And to express all this, we must blot out the remembrance of all wrongs, and be ready chearfully to take all occasions to do good unto them; yea, not only to take them, but to seek them: This will be a plain Evidence that no *Leaven* of *Malice* or *Revenge* hath soured our Spirits.

Well then to sum and close up all: What is it thou canst plead for *Revenge*, which the consideration of God's pardoning thee will not abundantly answer. Is it that the wrongs that others have done thee are great and insupportable? What, are they more intolerable than thy sins against God? Is it that he is a vile and inferiour person unto thee? How much more art thou so unto God? Is it that he hath often wronged thee? Are they not *ten thousand Talents* that God hath forgiven thee? Is it that he will be emboldened to wrong and injure thee again? Possibly so, but thou art

art not certain of it: However, conſider how often thou haſt abuſed the Mercy of God to encourage thee, in ſinning againſt him: Is it that Men will think thee baſe and cowardly if thou putteſt up ſuch wrongs and injuries? Seek thou the Honour that cometh from God, and not the vain fooliſh Repute of Men. But is God indeed accounted Faithful in pardoning thee? or doth he ſpare thee becauſe he dare not ſtrike thee? Certainly there is no offence, nor an aggravation of any offence, that can be pleaded as a Reaſon for *Revenge*, but the ſame may in a greater meaſure, and in a higher proportion be pleaded why *God* ſhould *Revenge* himſelf upon thee; and yet if notwithſtanding this, thou hopeſt for pardon and forgiveneſs from him: go then to thy Brother and do likewiſe.

And thus I have finiſhed the *Fifth Petition*, the matter of which being of ſuch vaſt and important conſequence, I have expatiated beyond what my Firſt intended Method would allow. I ſhall contract my ſelf in what remains, and keep my ſelf within the limits of an *Expoſition*.

We are now come unto the *Sixth* and *Laſt Petition* of this moſt Excellent and Divine Prayer, which ſome divide into two, making the one Negative, *Lead us not into Temptation*; and the other poſitive, *But deliver us from evil*. But the matter being not great, whether they be one or two, I ſhall not contend about it.

And here before I come to ſpeak of the *Petition* it ſelf, I ſhall (as I have done in the former) ſpeak ſomething concerning the Reaſon and Wiſdom of its Order and Method.

And the only thing that I ſhall remark, is that whereas it immediately follows upon that *Petition* wherein we beg the *Pardon of our Sins*, that we may not be *lead into Temptation*: This ought to teach us that it ſhould be our care not only to ſeek for the pardon of our paſt ſins, but to endeavour the prevention of ſin for the future. And therefore as when our Saviour cured the *impotent Man* that had

lain a long time at the *Pool* of *Bethesday* without relief, he gives him this caution, *John* 5. 14. *Behold thou art made whole, sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee.* So when God hath healed those Mortal Wounds that sin hath made in our Souls, by his pardoning Grace; it highly concerns us, without most exact circumspection to beware that we be not again entangled in guilt, and with our most fervent Affections to pray that we may not be exposed to the *fiery Darts* of the *Devil* to wound us anew: for Relapses and Recidivations are always most dangerous and fatal; and new Wounds received upon old Scars, most difficult to be healed. And indeed without this preventing Grace of God, all his pardoning Grace would be but in vain. It would be fruitless to forgive sins, if God did not withal secure us for the future from running upon the score with his Justice: for such is the Force and Fraud of the *Tempter*, and the corruption of our own Natures so prone to comply with whatsoever he offers and suggests to us, that did not God as well give us a stock to live upon, as *forgive* us our former *Debts*, we should soon run our selves as deep in Arrears as ever, and make our selves liable to be seized on by Justice and condemned to the Infernal Prison. And therefore that God's Grace in forgiving our Trespasses, may not be in vain, our Saviour hath taught us to subjoyn this Request, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from evil.* And thus much for the *Connexion* of this *Petition* with the foregoing.

The *Petition* it self contains in it two branches, the one against *Temptations*, the other against the prevalency of them: *Lead us not into Temptation*, suffer us not to be assaulted and buffeted by the wicked one: or if, O Lord, thou shalt in thy all-wise Counsel and Purpose permit us to be *Tempted*, yet deliver us from the evil to which we are *Tempted*. Let us endure *Temptations* as our Affliction, but let us not consent to them and make them our sins.

It is the former of theſe that I ſhall *firſt* ſpeak to, and therein I ſhall endeavour to ſhew:

Firſt, What *Temptations* are. And,

Secondly, How God may be ſaid to *lead us into Temptation*, for that is ſuppoſed when we pray he would not do ſo.

Firſt, What *Temptations* are. Temptation, according to the proper ſignification of the word, is no other but a *Trial* or *Probation*. And this may be of two kinds. Exploratory, or Suaſory.

Firſt, There is an *Exploratory Temptation*, to ſearch out and to diſcover what is in Man, what his Graces and Corruptions are.

Secondly, There is a *Suaſory* or *enticing Temptation*, that inclines the Will and Affections to cloſe with what is preſented to them.

Now in general, we may obſerve five ſeveral ſorts of *Temptations*, whereof ſome are of the former, others of the latter kind.

Firſt, Some whereby one Man Tempts another.

Secondly, Some whereby we Tempt our ſelves.

Thirdly, Some whereby we Tempt God.

Fourthly, Some whereby God Tempts us. And,

Fifthly, Some whereby the Devil Tempts us.

Firſt, There are ſome *Temptations* whereby one Man tempts another: And ſuch *Temptations* may be faultleſs, when they come only by Exploration, either to find out Mens great Excellencies: Thus the *Queen* of *Sheba* came to tempt or to prove *Solomon* with *hard Queſtions*, 2 Cron. 9. 1. to know whether his Wiſdom was anſwerable to the *Fame* that went of it. Or elſe to find out and diſcover their Rottenneſs and Hypocriſy; and thus the *Church* of *Epheſus* is commended for tempting or trying thoſe who ſaid they were Apoſtles and were not, finding them to be Lyars. But it is *Deviliſh*, when it is either by *Suaſion* unto that

which is *Evil*: Thus the *Whoriſh Woman* Tempted the *young Fool*, Prov. 7. 18. Or with a deſign to entrap or draw any into danger. Thus the *Old Prophet* Tempted the *young Prophet*, being vext that God ſhould Honour him with ſo important a Meſſage, whilſt he was paſſed by, and knowing that God would not ſuffer his diſobedience to go unpuniſhed, in 1 *Kings* 13. 18. And ſuch was the wicked Plot laid by the *Phariſees*, Luke 20. 23. when they came and asked our Saviour, whether *it was Lawful to pay Tribute to Cæſar or not?* which if he had affirmed, would have leſſened his Repute among the People, and made them to fall off from him, becauſe they looked upon *Cæſar* but as an *Uſurper*, and groaned for deliverance from the *Roman Yoke of Bondage*; yea, and many of them hoped and expected that this would have been effected by our Saviour. Or if he had denied, it would have brought him into danger of his life as an Enemy unto *Cæſar*, as afterwards he was accuſed to be.

Secondly, There is a way of *Temptation* whereby a Man *Tempts himſelf*, and that is Praiſe-worthy when it is only by Exploration and Trial of his own heart, to find out what Graces and what Corruptions lodge there. Thus we find the Saints in *Scripture* often examining and proving themſelves. And every Chriſtian is commanded expreſly ſo to do. 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves whether you be in the Faith, prove your own ſelves.* But it is wicked and ſinful in two caſes.

Firſt, Then a Man wickedly and ſinfully Tempts himſelf, when by preſuming upon his own ſtrength, he unneſſarily runs into danger, and ventures upon the next occaſions of ſinning, for this is to come within the *Devils Purliews*, and if any ſuch be made his prey, they muſt thank their own venturouſneſs and folly.

Thus we *Tempt* our ſelves to the Commiſſion of thoſe ſins, which we before-hand know ſuch company, or ſuch Em-

Employments, or other like Circumſtances will prompt us to commit.

Secondly, A Man is ſaid to Tempt himſelf, *when he is drawn aſide by his own Luſts and enticed.* James 1. 14. For whenſoever any particular ſinful Object is propounded, it is this Luſt that excites the heart to cloſe with it and embrace it. This is indeed the great *Tempter*, without which other *Temptations* to evil would be but weak and ineffectual. And though poſſibly they might prevail through the innate liberty of our wills, yet were it not for our corruptions that cleave unto us, *Temptations* would have no more advantage upon us than our own free choice, and we might as eaſily reject as conſent unto them.

Thirdly, There is a *Temptation* by which we are ſaid to Tempt God: For the *Scripture* frequently witneſſeth that God is *Tempted* by us, *Exod.* 12. 2. *Moſes* chiding the People of *Iſrael*, expoſtulates with them: *Wherefore do you Tempt the Lord?* And God himſelf complains of it, *Numb.* 10. 22. *That they had Tempted him ten times.* Mal. 3. 15. Acts 15. 10. and divers other places. God is therefore Tempted by us, not as we are unto evil. For this the *Apoſtle* expreſly denies, *James* 1. 13. *God cannot be Tempted to evil.* But,

Firſt, *Tempting of God*, is ſometimes taken for a preſumptuous trying of the Providence of God. When we have no warrant nor neceſſity to caſt our ſelves upon the extraordinary effects of it. Thus Chriſt Anſwers the Devil Tempting him to precipitate himſelf from the *Pinacle* of the *Temple*, upon confidence of an Extraordinary and Miraculous ſupport from God, *It is written*, ſays he, *Thou ſhalt not Tempt the Lord thy God*, Matth. 4. 7. That is, we muſt not put God upon working of *Miracles* for our deliverance, when we may keep our ſelves from the danger in an ordinary providential way.

Secondly, *Tempting* of God is often times the ſame with provoking

provoking him. And therefore we find them put together, *Pſal.* 95. 8. *As in the provocation and in the day of Temptation in the Wilderneſs.* And therefore, look how God may be ſaid to be provoked, ſo he may be ſaid to be Tempted. That is, both in condeſcention to our Capacities, and in reference to the effects of it: for as a Man that is provoked, is Tempted to take Revenge upon him that hath done him the injury: So God expreſſeth himſelf as provoked by our ſins, and Tempted thereby to inflict Wrath and Vengeance upon us for them. But this is only Figuratively. As for any proper *Temptation* by any new motion or inclination wrought in the Divine Will by the preſence of any new Object, ſo God cannot without Blaſphemy be ſaid to be Tempted.

Fourthly, There is a *Temptation* whereby God is ſaid to Tempt us: Now this is always Holy and Juſt; and it is only a *Temptation* of *Trial* and *Probation.* Sometimes it is to diſcover his Peoples Graces: And ſo he Tempted *Abraham*, that his Obedience might be conſpicuous, *Gen.* 22. 1. And ſometimes to diſcover their corruptions. So he Tempted *Hezekiah*, 2 *Cron.* 32. 31. It is ſaid, *That God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart*: Not but that God knew it before, for he is the Searcher of the Heart, and the Trier of the Reins. But that hereby it might be diſcovered and made apparent, and that *Hezekiah* by the diſcovery of his Pride and Corruption, might take occaſion to humble himſelf the more deeply before God.

Fifthly, There is a *Temptation* whereby *Satan* Tempts us: yea, it is his proper Work, and that from which he hath his Name ὁ πειράζων, the *Tempter*, 1 *Theſſal.* 3. 5. *Leſt by ſome means the Tempter might have Tempted you.* Now as God *Tempts* only by *Exploration* and *Trial*: So the *Devil* always *Tempts* by *Suaſion*, inducing us by all poſſible Arguments and Motives to the Commiſſion of ſin, that he may have advantage to accuſe us of it, and hereafter to torment us for it.

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Now among theſe many various kinds of *Temptations* which have been reckoned up, thoſe *Temptations* which we are to pray againſt, are of three ſorts.

Such as proceed from our own Luſts and Corruptions; ſuch as proceed from other Mens perſwading us, either by Motives or Examples unto that which is evil; or laſtly, ſuch as proceed from the *Devil*; or elſe they may be reduced to theſe two Heads. The Temptations which proceed from our own inbred Luſts and Corruptions, and thoſe which proceed from the *Devil*: for indeed wicked Men are but his Agents and Inſtruments, when they Tempt us to that which is evil.

Now that our Saviour Chriſt ſhould make it the great matter and object of our Prayers, to beg of God that we may not be *led into Temptation*, we may obſerve that it is a Chriſtian's Duty, not only to keep himſelf from ſin, but alſo to endeavour to keep himſelf from Temptation to ſin. For,

Firſt, It is a very ill ſign of a rotten and carnal heart, to be content to lie under a *Temptation*, although it doth not conſent to the commiſſion of ſin. It ſpeaks ſome kind of contentment and complacency that we take in the ſin, when though we do not commit it, yet we are very well pleaſed to hear of it, and to entertain Motions and Sollicitations to it: This argues the Soul is not chaſte towards God, that though we cannot enjoy it in commiſſion, yet we will make ſome recompence to our ſelves for the ſcrupulouſneſs of our Conſciences, by enjoying it in the Temptation.

Secondly, If you ſuffer a *Temptation* to lodge in your Hearts, you are in imminent danger of being prevailed upon by it: The *Temptation* will be continually gathering ſtrength, and your oppoſition againſt it may in ſome time flag and grow remiſs, and objects and opportunities and ſuch like advantages, may add ſuch a force to the *Temptation*, as may hurry you away into the commiſſion of the ſin contrary

trary to your former reſolutions: You can promiſe your ſelf no ſafety, no not from the commiſſion of the vileſt Sins, as long as you ſuffer the *Temptation* to abide upon you. Puddles that ſtand long unmoved will at laſt breed filthy and venomous Creatures: So a *Temptation* that lies long unmoved and undiſturbed upon you, will form ſome filthy and loathſome Sin or other. The only ſecure way is to ſtrike at the *Temptation* it ſelf, to cut that off, and then there is no danger to be feared from the Sin. This is the courſe St. *Paul* took, 2 *Cor.* 12. 8. when he was *buffeted by a Meſſenger from Satan*, that is aſſaulted by a *Temptation*, he not only takes care that he might not yield to it, that was not altogether enough for a truly Gracious Soul to do; but he labours to be rid of the *Temptation* it ſelf; *for this thing I beſought the Lord thrice*, that is often, *that it might depart from me.* He prays not only that he may be kept from the Sin to which he was *Tempted*, but that he might be freed alſo from the *Temptation* it ſelf.

Thirdly, Conſider that as all *Temptations* are dangerous, and that we have great reaſon to fear leaſt in the end they ſhould prevail upon us to commit the Sin to which we are *Tempted*; ſo moſt of them are not only *Temptations*, but Sins alſo. Indeed there is a *Temptation* to Sin, which is a *Temptation* only and no Sin; for ſo Chriſt himſelf was Tempted, *Matth.* 4. 1. *He was led into the Wilderneſs to be Tempted of the Devil.* And we read there with what *horrid Temptations* he was aſſaulted, even to Worſhip the *Devil*, to diſtruſt God, and to deſtroy himſelf. And yet as black as theſe *Temptations* were, they were only *Temptations* and no Sins; for ſo the *Apoſtle* tells us, *Heb.* 4. 15. *He was Tempted in all things like unto us, Sin only excepted.* And ſuch ſometimes are the *Temptations* wherewith the *Devil* aſſaults the Children of God, horrid and helliſh *Temptations*, even to deny the very Being of God, the Truth of the *Scriptures*, the Immortality of the Soul, Heaven and Hell,

Hell, and ſuch bublings of Blaſphemies againſt the very Fundamentals and Ground-works of Religion; and yet if we be watchful preſently to abhor and reject theſe injections of *Satan*, and to caſt back into his Face theſe his *fiery Darts* which he ſhoots into our Souls; they are not our Sins, though they are our Troubles; but they ſhall be charged upon *Satan*, to whom of right they do belong, we being but only Paſſive and Sufferers in them. But truly the moſt of our *Temptations* are Sins themſelves; and therefore we have great Reaſon and need to pray againſt them; for they are Sins unto Sins; Sins as they are irregular and inordinate Motions of our Paſſions and Affections, and unto Sin as they tend to the bringing forth of farther Evil. And ſuch are all the *Temptations* of our inbred Luſts and Corruptions, when our Deſires and Affections ſtrongly encline us to thoſe *Objects* which God by his expreſs Law hath forbidden us. Were it not for theſe ſinful *Temptations*, the others which are immediately injected by the *Devil*, would not have any great advantage to prevail over us; for by reaſon of our Luſts and Corruptions, our Hearts always ſtand open to let in the *Devil*, and were it not that theſe have ſeized on the Soul, the *Devil* muſt have ſtood without, and though he had knock'd, yet would he have knock'd in vain: And therefore we ſee in his *firſt Temptation*, he deals all without doors, there was no Natural Luſt in our *Firſt Parents* to befriend him, or to betray the Soul unto him: He ſhuts up himſelf therefore in the Body of a *Serpent*, queſtioning with *Eve* about God's Commands, perſwades her of the deſirableneſs of the *forbidden Fruit*; tells her that *God's Threatning* was rather to fright them than to hurt them. But in all theſe Methods of Tempting, *Satan* had no admiſſion into the Soul, becauſe Luſt as yet had taken no poſſeſſion of it; but ever ſince, the Corruption of our Natures, contracted by the commiſſion of the firſt Offence, the *Devil* doth not ſtand to *Tempt* us without doors, but he

enters boldly as into the Houſe of his old Friend *Concupiſcence*; nay, as into his own Houſe; for the Souls of wicked Men are ſo called, *Matth.* 12. 29. He is by Luſt let into the very inmoſt receſſes and retirements of the Heart, and can now propound *Objects* immediately to our *Fancies*, and by our *Fancies* darken our Underſtandings and Affections, and incline our Wills.

Again, our Natural Corruption as it admits, ſo it entertains and cheriſheth the *Temptations* of the *Devil*. A ſpark of Fire, if there were no fewel prepared for it to ſeize on, would preſently die and vaniſh. And ſo truly would *Satan's Temptations*, that are like ſo many ſparks of *Hell Fire* ſtruck by the *Devil* into our Souls; were it not for the prepared fuel, the catching Tinder of our Luſts and Corruptions, theſe *Temptations* would ſoon go out and expire; and be like a *flaſh* of *Lightning*, that might poſſibly ſtartle us, but could not burn us. And thus though our *Saviour Chriſt* was grievouſly *tempted*; yet it is ſaid, *Joh.* 14. 30. *The Prince of this World cometh and hath nothing in me*; that is, the *Devil* could find no Sin or Corruption in him, and therefore could faſten none of his *Temptations* upon him.

Thus we ſee what abundant reaſon there is for us to pray earneſtly againſt *Temptations*, whether they proceed from *Satan*, or from our own Corruptions; the one ſort being always Sins of themſelves, and both ſorts inclining and enducing us unto Sin.

But ſince *Satan*, and our own Hearts prove *Tempters* unto us, ſome may poſſibly ask, how ſhall we know when it is *Satan* that *Tempts* us, and when the *Temptation* ariſeth from our own Corruptions?

The *Queſtion* is nice and difficult; yet becauſe it may tend to the ſatisfaction of ſome who are curious in obſerving the Workings of their own Souls. I Anſwer,

Fir,

First, There is but one kind of *Temptations* to Sin, which have not their riſe and original uſually from Luſt, and thoſe are *Temptations* to ſin againſt the Light and Law of Nature, as to the denying thoſe Truths that are clear and evident by Natural Reaſon and ſtrong Impreſſions on the Minds of Men; as the being of a God, the Immortality of the Soul, future Rewards and Puniſhments, and the like; or elſe the doing of thoſe things which are repugnant to the Dictates of the Law of Nature, as for a Man to be *Tempted* to offer Violence to himſelf, and to deſtroy himſelf. It is very probable that ſuch *Temptations* have not their firſt riſe and original from our Natural Corruptions; but are immediately darted into the Soul by the *Devil*; though indeed our Corruptions too often catch at them and brood upon them, till they have from ſuch *horrid Temptations* as theſe conceived ſome *horrid* and *monſtrous* Sin in the Soul. Such injections as theſe, are Balls of *Wild-Fire* kindled in *Hell* and caſt into the Soul by the *Devil*; and are not our Sins any farther than they are entertained by us and conſented unto.

Secondly, As for thoſe *Temptations* which have a greater compliance to the corrupt tendency and inclinations of our ſinful Natures, which are not to ſuch unnatural Sins as the other, it is very hard if not impoſſible to Judge, whether they originally proceed from *Satan*, or from our own inbred Corruptions; uſually they both joyn together, if *Satan* firſt inject them, uſually our Luſts nurſe and foſter them; or if our wicked Hearts be the firſt *Parents* of them, uſually *Satan* inforceth them, and by additional recruits of *Temptations*, makes them more prevalent and permanent, and by fair and ſpecious colours makes them more plauſible and taking: And certainly there being ſuch an innumerable Company of *Evil Spirits* that notwithſtanding the great Work and Employment they have to do in the World; yet *Hell* could ſpare a *whole Legion* of them to Garriſon in one

poſſeſſed Man, we may not doubt but that they are continually buſie, prying into every one of our Tempers. And as long experience hath made them very ſagacious in gueſſing at the firſt motions of our Hearts, by the alterations they find in our Fancies, or the Humours of our Bodies, of which they have an exact intuitive knowledge: So when by ſuch viſible Symptoms they perceive Corruption ſtirring in us, they preſently joyn iſſue with it, and by all their art and policy inflame our Luſts by adding new fuel to them, improving the firſt Motions and imperfect Embryo's of Wickedneſs, till they arrive to their full ſtrength and ſtature.

Thus, if by any *Symptoms* the *Devil* can perceive Wrath and Malice boyling within our Breaſt, he will preſently move the Tongue to give it vent in opprobrious and reviling Speeches; and theſe he will ſecond with injurious and violent Actions. So St. *James* tells us, *James* 3. 6. *The Tongue ſetteth on Fire the courſe of Nature, and is it ſelf ſet on Fire of Hell.* But as a Holy Man, I think St. *Auſtin*, being demanded by a curious Queſtioniſt concerning the *Origin* of Evil, how Sin firſt got into the World? replied, It was not ſo neceſſary to diſcourſe how it came into the World, as to conſider how we might get it out again. So truly it is not ſo neceſſary critically to enquire, whence *Temptations* come into the Heart, as how they may be got out of it. And to this I may give the ſame *Anſwer*, that Chriſt did to his *Diſciples*, Matth. 17. 21. *This kind goeth not out but by Faſting and Prayer.* We ought fervently to pray that God would rebuke the Wicked One, and cauſe him to depart from us; that he would by his Grace ſuppreſs all the Tumultuous Rebellions of our own Luſts and Paſſions, and neither lead us into *Temptation*, nor leave us under *Temptation.*

And thus I have done with the *Firſt General* in this *Petition*, ſhewing you what *Temptations* are.

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The Second is, To ſhew you how God may be ſaid to lead Men into *Temptation*; for it may ſeem very ſtrange, that the Holy and Righteous God ſhould have a Hand in *Tempting* of Men, which is ſo proper a Work of the *Devil*, and of our own Corruptions.

But the different manner of God's *leading us into Temptations*, and *Satan's Tempting* us, will ſufficiently juſtifie him from the leaſt aſperſion or ſuſpicion of being the Author of Sin. And therefore,

Firſt, God is ſaid to *lead us into Temptation*, when he providentially preſents outward *Objects* and Occaſions, which do ſolicite and draw forth our inward Corruptions. When the *Temptations* of our inward Luſts meet with external enducements that are caſt in a Man's way by God's Providence; then as we may be ſaid to *Tempt* him, ſo God may be ſaid to *lead us into Temptation*. Thus *Achan* and *Judas* were no doubt of it covetous Wretches, before the one ſtole the *Wedge of Gold*, and the other *betrayed his Maſter*: But the *Temptations* of thoſe Luſts, were not as yet come to their ſtrength, till the glittering of the *Wedge of Gold*, and the *proffered Reward* of the *High-Prieſt*, raiſed their Covetouſneſs to its full heighth. Indeed we find the propenſions of our wicked Hearts ſtrongly bent towards Sin at all times, even then when we have no *external Objects* propounded to excite them; but when theſe inward inclinations do meet with outward enforcements, as alluring *Objects*, fit Opportunities, ſtrong Perſwaſions from others, inducing Examples, or the like; the *Temptation* then grows headſtrong and wild to purpoſe; and if Grace doth not rein it in with a hard hand, it will certainly hurry us into the commiſſion of that Sin which hath ſo many advantages to commend it to the Soul. Now all theſe *Objective Temptations*, God may moſt righteouſly adminiſter to our Luſts in the common courſe of his *Providence*, and we often ſee he doth ſo: For there is no outward act of Sin committed in the World,

World, but the Sinner took occaſion from ſome *Providence* of God to perpetrate it. A *Thief* ſteals not any thing, but what *God's Providence* brings in his way. The *Murderer* ſlays not any Man but whom *Providence* offers to his Sword and Violence. And all the Villainy that ever was acted in the World was by a *Providence*, tendring the Luſts of Men *Objects* and *Opportunities*, without which Sin conceived in us could not be brought to light.

And therefore when we pray that God would not *lead us into Temptation*, we pray that God by his *Providence* would ſo order and diſpoſe all the occurrences of our lives, ſo as not to lay before us thoſe *Objects*; nor proffer us thoſe *occaſions* which might either excite or draw forth our inbred Corruptions. And indeed this is a moſt neceſſary Petition to be preferred to the Throne of Grace; for we cannot but be conſcious to our ſelves, how hard a thing it is to keep our Hearts from ſinful Deſires, when we encounter *Objects* to excite them: And how hard a thing it is to keep our ſelves from ſinful Actions when once ſinful Deſires are excited in us.

Secondly, God is ſaid to *lead us into Temptation*, when he withdraws the influences of his Grace and Spirit from us, and leaves us under the Power of a *Temptation*. Thoſe very *Temptations* which when aſſiſted by Divine Grace, we could eaſily reſiſt and ſubdue; will when God withdraws himſelf from us, ſadly prevail over us, and ſhamefully foil us. Thus it is ſaid that God left *Hezekiah* to *try, or to tempt him*, 2 *Chron.* 32. 31. And indeed ſince our corrupt Natures are of themſelves prone only unto evil, if God withdraw the Auxiliaries of his Grace, (as for many righteous cauſes he often doth,) every *Temptation* that aſſaults us will raviſh our Conſciences, and captivate our Souls: For all the ſecurity that we have from the committing of the moſt flagitious Crimes, is wholly from God's Grace, either reſtraining or renewing us; the former holding us back from the outward

ward act of Sin; the latter weakning and deſtroying the inward habit and principle of Sin. And therefore when we pray that God would not *lead us into Temptation*, we beg that he would ſtill continue the influences of his Grace unto us, and by them excite and quicken our Graces; that his Grace may not forſake us, nor our Grace fail us. That we may not be expoſed to the Aſſaults of Spiritual Enemies naked and defenceleſs, to become a ſure and eaſie Prey unto them.

Thirdly, God is ſaid to *lead Men into Temptation* when he permits *Satan* and Wicked Men his Inſtruments to *tempt* us; yea, ſometimes he gives them commiſſion, as well as permiſſion; and appoints and ſends them to do it. Thus we find in the caſe of *Ahab*, 1 Kings 22. 24. *Who ſhall perſwade Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead*; and an *Evil Spirit* ſteps forth, and very officiouſly accepts of the Employment, as moſt congruous to ſo malicious a Nature; and God ſends him with his commiſſion in the 22 verſe, *Thou ſhalt perſwade him and prevail, go forth and do ſo*; and ſo he did. And as God doth ſometimes thus ſend the *Tempter*, and give him commiſſion to aſſault and prevail over wicked and ungodly Perſons, their former Sins provoking him to puniſh them with farther Impieties. So whenſoever any of us are *Tempted*, God doth at leaſt permit *Satan* to ſift and winnow us, ſometimes to his own deſeat, but too often to ours. And in this ſence there is no *Temptation* that befalls us, but God leads us into it. And therefore it is very obſervable, that whereas in 1 *Chron.* 21. 1. It is ſaid, that *Satan provoked David to Number Iſrael*; yet in 2 *Sam.* 24. 1. it is ſaid, *the Lord moved David againſt Iſrael, to ſay, Go number Iſrael and Judah*; here one and the ſame *Temptation* is attributed both to God and to the *Devil*; but it muſt be underſtood under a diverſe habitude and reſpect; *Satan* Tempted him effectively, God only permiſſively. And thus God may be ſaid to *lead every Man*

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into Temptation whom he ſuffers to be Tempted. When therefore we pray that God would *not lead us into Temptation*, we pray that he would not permit the *Devil* to approach near unto us, nor to caſt his *Fiery Darts* at us; but that he would put a hook into the noſe of that great *Leviathan*, and ſo bridle and reſtrain his Fury, that he may not be able to aſſault us. Theſe now are all the ways that I know of, how God may be ſaid *to lead Men into Temptation*. Either by offering them objects and opportunities by his Providence, which may correſpond with their inward Luſts and Corruptions, and as it were entice and call them forth. Or elſe by permitting *Satan* and wicked Men to Tempt us. Or laſtly, by withdrawing from us the influences of his Grace and Holy Spirit, and leaving us under the power of *Temptations* when they do aſſault us. But for any proper, effective, or perſuaſive *Tempting* of Men to ſin; this is infinitely abhorrent to his Pure and Holy Nature, in which ſence St. *James* tells us, *James* 1. 13. *Let no Man ſay when he is tempted, that he is tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted to evil, neither tempteth he any Man.* But though God cannot thus *Tempt* any Man without a ſtain to his Infinite Purity and Holineſs: yet he may *lead Men into Temptation*: either Providentially, or Permiſſively, or by ſubſtracting his Grace, whereby they ſhould ſtand: And yet at laſt, juſtly puniſheth them for ſinning. And this is no unrighteous thing with God, for he lays no conſtraint upon the freedom of our Wills, but we ſin freely and of our own accord.

Now although God can eaſily keep us from all aſſaults and attempts of our Spiritual Enemies, yet he permits us to be *Tempted* by them for moſt Wiſe and Holy ends. As,

Firſt, He leaves theſe *Canaanites* to moleſt us, to teach us the *Wars of the Lord*, to make us continually Watchful, to breath and exerciſe our Graces, to adminiſter matter for our Conqueſt, and occaſion for our Crown and Triumph.

Secondly,

Secondly, To convince us of our own utter inability to ſtand of our ſelves without his help and aſſiſtance: thereby engaging us to depend upon his Arm, and to call for Divine Supplies and Succours.

Thirdly, To Glorifie both his Juſtice and Mercy. His Juſtice in giving up wicked Men to the rage of Temptaons, to be hurried by them from ſin to ſin, till at laſt they put an end to the Succeſſion of their ſins in Eternal Damnation. And his Mercy in ſuccouring of, and ſupporting and delivering his Children out of all their *Temptations*. And therefore when St. *Paul* prayed to be freed from the buffettings of the Meſſenger of *Satan*; God anſwers him, *My Grace is ſufficient for thee; my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. When the *Devil* preſumes he hath ſo well laid his *Temptations* that it is impoſſible for the People of God to eſcape his Snares, yet God finds a way for their deliverance out of them all. For God holds the great *Tempter* under a powerful reſtraint, ſo that he cannot touch us beyond permiſſion and commiſſion. And therefore that place in *Revelat.* 2. 10. is very remarkable to this purpoſe, *Fear none of thoſe things that thou ſhalt ſuffer, behold the Devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into Priſon, that you may be tried, and you ſhall have Tribulation ten days.* How many reſtraints are here mentioned to be put upon that malicious Spirit? He ſhall *caſt into Priſon*, whereas he would willingly caſt into *Hell*, or at leaſt into the Grave: It ſhall be but *ſome of you*, whereas his ſpight and rage is againſt all the Children of God: And it ſhall be *but for ten days*, but for a ſhort time neither: the Place, the Number, the Time, all limitted, and that with ſuch a reſtraint, that all the Pride and Rage of the *Devil* ſhall not be able to exceed it.

Fourthly, God permits his own Children to be *Tempted*, that by their Victory over *Temptations* he may confound the Malice of *Satan*, and commend the Excellency of his own Ways and Service. This highly honours God, and

ſhames the *Malice* of the *Devil*, when we are neither terrified by Sufferings, nor induced by the Pleaſures of ſin from the courſe of our Obedience; for this evidently declares, That we are True and Loyal to our Great *Sovereign*. That we more fear his Eternal Wrath and Diſpleaſure, than thoſe light Afflictions that are but for a moment; and that we find more true Joy and ſolid Delight in his Service, than in the ways of Sin and Vanity. And therefore God calls us forth as his Champions, puts his Cauſe in our hands, and bids us reſiſt manfully for the Credit and Honour of Piety, and then lets looſe *Satan* upon us, whom if we can but Conquer, (which certainly we ſhall do if we but ſeriouſly reſolve it) God and Angels, who from the *Theatre* of *Heaven* are Spectators of the Combat, give us their Applauſe, and will hereafter give us our Crown. See how God Glories over this baffled *Devil*, and upbraids him with the Victorious Conſtancy of his Servant *Job*: God had before commended the Integrity of *Job*, *Chap.* 1. 8. *Haſt thou conſidered my Servant Job, that there is none like him upon the Earth, a perfect and upright Man, one that feareth God and eſcheweth Evil.* To this that *Malicious Spirit* ſullenly replies, *Doth Job fear God for nought?* thou needeſt not Glory in his ready Service and Obedience when he is ſo well paid for it; no wonder he is ſo Pious and Devout when he gets ſo well by it; but leave him a while to me, to take from him thoſe enducements that make him ſo Pious and Holy, and I will undertake that even this perfect and upright Man ſhall *curſe thee even to thy Face*: God accepts the Challenge on his Servants behalf, *Satan* and *Job* enter the Liſt, the *Devil* buffets him ſore, deſtroys all his Cattel, ruins his Houſe, kills his Children; yet *Job* ſhrinks not for all this, but wreſtles naked with his Adverſary and foils him: See now how God rejoyces at his Champion's Victory, and upbraids the *Devil* with his ſhameful overthrow, *Chap.* 2. 3. *Haſt thou conſidered my Servant Job, that there is none like him*

him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright Man, one that fear-eth God and eſcheweth Evil. God repeats the ſame Character and Commendation which he had before given him, Glorying as it were over *Satan*, that *Job* had made his Words good; *yea, and ſtill he holds faſt his Integrity, although thou moveſt me againſt him to deſtroy him without cauſe.* So truly, whenſoever God ſuffers us to be *Tempted*, it is that by our Conqueſt he might bring Honour to himſelf, and Credit to Piety and Religion. For this makes it appear, That we ſee ſo much of Excellency in the ways of God, that nothing in the World, whether Croſſes or Crowns, Thorns or Thrones, Pains or Pleaſures, Loſs or Profit, can in the leaſt perſwade us to baulk or forſake them. And in ſuch an Heroick *Champion* as this, God himſelf Glories and Triumphs.

And thus I have finiſhed the former part of this *Petition*, *Lead us not into Temptation*; the next follows, *But deliver us from evil.*

Now here before I come to ſpeak of the Words themſelves, let us obſerve their connexion with, and dependance upon the foregoing Words; for whereas our Saviour hath taught us to pray with this Adverſative Particle, *But lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from evil*; this may inſtruct us. That the beſt ſecurity againſt ſin, is to be ſecured againſt *Temptations* unto ſin: For though it be no excuſe that we are violently tempted to ſin when we yield to the commiſſion of it; yet withal, it too often happens, that thoſe whom God *leads into Temptation*, and engageth amidſt the preſs of their Enemies, it too often happens, that they come off bleeding and wounded. Yet,

Firſt, It is no excuſe for ſinning, becauſe no *Temptation* is a *Compulſion*. The *Devil* can only perſwade, he cannot conſtrain us to ſin: God may let him into the fancy, and ſuffer him to Paint upon that the moſt alluring Images that Vice can be repreſented in, but when he hath done all this, it is ſtill our own choice that makes us like what his

Pencil hath drawn there. And in this lies a great difference between God's Operations upon us by his Grace, and Satan's upon his Suggeſtions; in that God hath an immediate acceſs to the very elicite Acts of our Wills and Underſtandings; and can and doth by his Spirit, actuate them by an immediate energy, and call forth not only by, but to their Objects: But now theſe are ſuch Sacred Partments of the Soul, that the *Devil* hath no *Key* to them. And therefore his Method is to bribe the attendants on theſe chief Powers of the Soul, the *Fancy* and the *Paſſions*, to which he hath admiſſion through the near dependance they have upon material *Organs*, and by theſe to ſend in Meſſages, and offer Propoſals to it; which yet if it be not baſely falſe and treacherous to its God, it may reject and diſdain. If the *Devil* could force Men, he would likewiſe juſtifie them, for that can be no ſin, where there is no liberty: The ſame *Temptation* which compels to any Action, would likewiſe make that Action to be no Tranſgreſſion; becauſe Laws are not given but upon ſuppoſition of freedom. And therefore whoſoever ſins upon a *Temptation*, ſins not meerly becauſe he was *Tempted*, but becauſe he would ſin: And though the ſin had not been committed without the *Temptation*, yet the *Devil* can be no farther chargable with it, than only becauſe his Malice prompts him to perſwade us. Our own Wills are the moſt dangerous *Devils*, freely embracing the proffers of *Satan*, and conſently to our own deſtruction, and whilſt we conſent to that upon which God hath threatned and entailed it. And therefore when thou ſinneſt, think not to lay the fault upon *Satan*, or his *evil Inſtruments* whom he makes uſe of in *Tempting*, for though it be their fault and guilt to *Tempt*, yet it is only thine to yield, and God will not condemn thee for being *Tempted*, which thou couldſt not help; but for yielding and conſenting, which is thine own free Act and thine own Sin alſo. Thou who art drawn away by thy lewd Companions,

panions, to abuſe thy ſelf and diſhonour thy body by *Riot* and *Luxury*, or to break God's Laws and Man's by Theft, or any other condemned Crimes, though thou haſt a great deal of reaſon to hate them, yet haſt thou infinitely more reaſon to hate and abhor thy ſelf. They can but perſuade, they cannot compel thee,; yea, if they ſhould threathen thee with *Death* it ſelf, unleſs thou conſenteſt: yet, thou lieſt under no force, but ſinneſt freely, and upon very weak motives doſt deſtroy and damn thy own Soul: ſince all motives inducing to ſin muſt be accounted weak when God hath over-balanced them with the promiſe of everlaſting Life, and the threatning of everlaſting Death. And therefore we find God as juſtly, as frequently in *Scripture*, charging Mens perdition upon themſelves, and laying the blood of their Souls upon the ſtubborn reſolvedneſs of their own Wills. *Hoſea* 13. 9. *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf.* John 5. 40. *Ye will not come unto me that you may have Life.* Matth. 23. 37. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem; how often would I have gathered you, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, and you would not?* And therefore let your *Temptations* be what they will, yet the ſin and guilt is ſtill your own; if as you are led into *Temptations*, ſo *Temptations* lead you into *Sin.*

Secondly, Though it be no excuſe for ſinning, yet it is too ſeldom ſeen, that thoſe who are brought into *Temptation*, are brought off again without contracting ſome guilt on their *Conſciences* by it. For ſince there is ſo great a Correſpondence between *Temptations* and our *Corruptions*, it would be as ſtrange for a Man that hath been hotly aſſaulted by them, to have no impreſſion made upon him, as to carry Fire in his Boſom and his Cloaths not be burnt: yea, almoſt as *Miraculous* as to walk ſecure in the midſt of a *Fiery Furnace* untouch'd by the Flames. There is a ſtrong ſimpathy between our corrupt hearts and *Satan's* Temptations; and as it is with ſtrings tuned to *Uniſons*, upon the motion

motion of the one, the other alſo will move and vibrate: So is it here, the heart vibrates and is ſecretly affected upon the firſt motion of a *Temptation* with ſome paſſion of Delight and Complacency towards that ſinful Object. And there is a kind of liking and approbation of it in the very firſt conception of our Thoughts, before they are yet deliberated and digeſted; ſo that it is almoſt as impoſſible for Temptations to aſſault us without leaving ſome guilt and pollution behind them, as it is for *Objects* rightly preſented to a *Mirrour*, to make no impreſſion of their Image upon it. For though the *Temptation* ſhould produce nothing but hovering and fleeting *Idea's*, and ſome imperfect ſhadows of Deſires and Affections in us, which yet are check'd and ſcattered, as ſoon as ever they begin to form themſelves, yet there is not the thinneſt film of a ſinful thought, nor the leaſt breathing of a ſinful deſire; but the Holy Law of God and his Word, which reacheth to the dividing aſunder of the Soul and Spirit, and is a Judge and a Diſcerner of the Thoughts and intents of the Heart, doth ſtrictly prohibit and condemn theſe callow, unfledg'd motions of our Hearts, to be Concupiſcence, the ſad effects of *Original ſin*, and the fruitful cauſe of all actual.

And therefore if we would be *delivered from evil*, we have very great cauſe firſt to pray that we be not *led into Temptation*: For ſome *Temptations* do almoſt ſo inſeparably follow one upon another, that this will be our beſt ſecurity againſt thoſe ſecret deſires and wouldings, and firſt ſmatterings and rudiments of wickedneſs, which elſe the compliance of our corrupt hearts with *Satan's Temptations* will certainly betray us unto. Hence it is, that when God in *Scripture* frequently dehorts us from ſin, he extends the prohibition to all *Temptations* and *Occaſions* of ſinning. Yea thoſe things which in themſelves conſidered, may be lawfully and innocently done by us, yet becauſe they may prove Snares and *Temptations* to us, we muſt as carefully

refrain

refrain from them, as we earneſtly deſire to keep our ſelves far from ſin. And therefore it ſufficeth not the *Wiſe Man* to command, *If ſinners entice, conſent thou not*, Prov. 1. 10. but that thou mayeſt be ſure not to conſent, thou muſt order thy Actions and Converſe ſo, as that thou mayeſt not be enticed by them: in the 15. *verſe* ſays he, *Walk not thou in the way with them, refrain thy feet from their path.* And ſo we have the ſame Counſel given us by him in another *Chapter*, that we may not be inveagled by the allurements of a ſtrange Woman, be ſure to avoid all occaſions thereof, *Prov.* 5. 8. *Remove thy way far from her, come not near the door of her Houſe.* And again, *Prov.* 4. 14, 15. *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil Men, avoid it, paſs not by it, turn from it, paſs away.* Here is earneſtneſs even to a *tautology*, as ſome may prophanely think; but *Sacred Writ* can admit of no ſuch thing. But there are ſo many expreſſions heaped up, ſignifying the ſame thing only, to denote how great the neceſſity of avoiding *Temptations* and *Occaſions* to evil, is to thoſe who deſire to avoid the ſin. We have treacherous and deceitful hearts within us, that have often betrayed us when we have truſted them. And I beſeech you, call to mind when you have emboldned your ſelves to venture upon *Temptations* and ſinful *Occaſions*, being confident and fully reſolved not to yield to them: Have you not often been ſurprized and led away Captive, contrary to your Hopes, contrary to your Intentions, contrary to your Reſolutions, contrary to the vain Confidences with which you were before poſſeſs'd? Methinks former experience ſhould make you cautious, never again to truſt thoſe hearts with ſuch opportunities and advantages for wickedneſs, ſince they have been ſo often already treacherous and deceitful to us. Venture them not therefore upon *Temptations*, for what ſecurity have you that a ſinful heart will not ſin; yea, and betray you to commit thoſe great abominations

nations which poſſibly you cannot now think of, without horrour and ſhivering.

And thus much I thought fit to note to you from the connexion of this part of the *Petition* with the former, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.*

In the words themſelves we have two things chiefly conſiderable: The thing that we pray againſt, and the Perſon to whom we pray. That which we pray againſt is *Evil*, that we may be *delivered from it.* The Perſon to whom we pray, is God our Heavenly Father.

That which we pray againſt, is *Evil.* Some limit this word *Evil* only unto *Satan*, making the ſence to be, deliver us from the *Evil one*: founding this Interpretation upon that *Article* that is joyned with the Original Word πονηρὸς; but this is not always deſcretive, but ſometimes indefinite, as for inſtance, *Matth.* 12. 35. and many other places. And therefore conſidering the Comprehenſiveneſs of this Prayer, we ought to allow the Word a large extent, and to comprehend under it,

Firſt, *Satan* whoſe proper *Style* and *Epithete* it is to be called, *the Evil one*: and ſo we find this *black Title* given him in *Scripture*, Matth. 13. 19. *The wicked one cometh and ſnatcheth away that which was ſown.* And 1 John 2. 13, 19. *You have overcome the wicked one.* He is the wicked one eminently and ſingularly. He is the chief Author of *Evil*, his *Temptations* are all unto *Evil*, his delight is only in *Evil*, he is the Father of all thoſe that do *Evil.* And therefore this is the moſt proper and ſignificant Character of the *Devil.* But yet it is alſo aſcribed unto Men according to their reſemblance of him.

Secondly, All other *Evils* are here meant, whether they be of ſin, or ſorrow; whether they be Tranſgreſſions, or Puniſhments; and that either Temporal puniſhments in thoſe Judgments which God inflicts upon ſinners here: or Eternal Judgments, ſuch as he hath threatned to inflict upon them

them hereafter. From all theſe we pray to be delivered; but the greateſt of all theſe, is Sin. For,

Firſt, It is greateſt in the Nature of it, as being the only thing that is contrary to the greateſt Good, even God; for in all other things elſe in the World there is ſomething of Good, even as much as derived and participated of God: And ſo the very *Devils* themſelves have a *Metaphyſical* Goodneſs in them, as they are Creatures and have received their Beings and Powers from God, who is the Author of nothing that is *Evil*. But *Sin* hath not the leaſt ray or footſteps of Goodneſs in it, but is only defect and irregularity: And that alone which as his Soul always hates, ſo his Hands never made.

Secondly, It is the greateſt *Evil* in the Effects and Conſequences of it. It once turn'd Glorious *Angels* into hideous *Devils*, and tumbled them down from Heaven to Hell, filled the World with Woes and Plagues, brought Death and Diſeaſes, and a vaſt and endleſs ſum of Miſeries into it; it torments and terrifies the Conſcience, kindles Hell-flames, expoſes the Soul to the eternal and direful revenges of the great God; and is ſo perfectly and only *Evil*, that the worſt of things here were they free from the Contagion of *Sin* would be excellent and amiable.

To pray therefore againſt the *Evil* of *Sin*, is to pray againſt all other *Evils* whatſoever; for the *Devil*, the *Evil One*, cannot hurt us but by *Sin*: And no other *Evil* can befall us but for *Sin*, God inflicting them as the due Guerdon and Reward of our Tranſgreſſions. *Sin* therefore being the chief and Principal *Evil*, and all others but retainers to it; I ſhall at preſent ſpeak only of God's delivering us from *Sin*.

Now as there are Two things in *Sin* which make it ſo exceeding *Evil*, the Guilt of it whereby it Damns, and the Filth of it whereby it Pollutes the Soul; ſo God hath Two ways to deliver us from it.

Firſt, By removing the Guilt already contracted, which he doth in juſtifying and pardoning the Sinner.

Secondly, By preventing us from falling into the filth and pollution of it for the future.

Of the Pardon of Sin I have already largely treated in the foregoing Petition. The Deliverance from Evil, which we here pray for, is by preventing it for the future. And whereas we are taught by our *Saviour* to beg this of God our Heavenly Father, we may obſerve, that it is only the Almighty Power of God that can keep us from Sin; and that will appear if we conſider, either our Enemies, or our ſelves.

Firſt, Conſider the mighty Advantages that our great Enemy the *Devil* hath againſt us: As he is a Spirit he is both powerful and ſubtile; and both theſe are whetted by his great Malice againſt us; long experience alſo for above five thouſand years hath made him very politick in dealing with Souls, and carrying on his own deſigns and intereſt: He knows our temper, our paſſions, and our inclinations, and can chuſe and cull out thoſe *Objects* which ſhall infallibly ſtrike and affect us; he waits thoſe *Mollia tempora fandi*, thoſe eaſie hours of whiſpering his ſuggeſtions to us when we are moſt facile and compliant, when we are moſt eaſily wrought upon, and made ſoft to his hands by ſome foregoing circumſtances: And if after all this he deſpairs to prevail upon us as a *Devil*, he can quickly ſhift his ſhape and transform himſelf into an *Angel of Light*, and engage our very Conſciences unto evil; he can diſguiſe his Temptations into impulſes of the *Holy Spirit*, perſwade us that what he prompts us to is our Duty, head his *fiery Darts* with *Scripture Sentences*, wrap up his Poiſon in the leaves of the *Bible*, and wound our Souls by our Conſciences; and certainly this *Devil* of Light is now gone abroad into the World with all that Power of Deceivableneſs he can, and we cannot but with ſad and bleeding Hearts obſerve his too general

general prevalency and ſucceſs: And beſides all this he is continually preſent with us, follows us up and down where ever we go, and is always at our Elbow to prompt us to Evil, and at our Right Hand to oppoſe us in that which is Good. *Hell* hath *Emiſſaries* enough to afford every Man a *Friend* for his Attendant; and theſe critically obſerve every glance of thine Eyes, every flaſh of thy Paſſions, and are preſently ready to apply ſuitable *Temptations* unto thee, and to ſtrike thee in that part of thy Soul which is ſofteſt and moſt yielding. And as the *Syrians* that were ſent by *Benhadad* to the *King* of *Iſrael*, to intercede for him, watched every Word that ſhould fall from his Mouth, that they might lay hold of it to obtain farther Favour from him: So theſe *Spies* of *Hell* do watch every kind Word, and every kind look of thine towards Sin, and want no skill to improve them to obtain yet greater matters from thee. Now if God did not appear to deliver us from theſe ſubtle *Wiles* and *Methods* of the *Devil*, how ſoon would he make Fools of the wiſeſt and moſt experienced Chriſtians?

Secondly; Conſider the mighty Diſ-advantages that we lie under to oppoſe the *Temptations* of the *Devil*, which though they be many and great, yet I ſhall name but two, which may be found even in the beſt of Men.

Firſt, Our inadvertency and heedleſsneſs, through which we are often ſurprized into Sin, and captivated by the cunning craftineſs of our Enemies which lie in wait to deceive. How ſeldom is it that we ſtand upon our Guard, or if we do that we are compleatly armed? Sometimes our *Shield*, ſometimes our *Helmets*, ſometimes our *Sword* of the *Spirit* is wanting: How ſeldom is it that we attend all the Motions of the Enemy? Indeed a Chriſtian ſhould look round about him; for he is every where beſet and encompaſſed about with Enemies; and whilſt he is vigilant to ward one part, the *Devil* falſifies his thruſt, and wounds him in another; but if he cannot wound on the Right Hand by *Preſumption*,

he will try what he can do on the Left by *Deſpair*; if he cannot prevail by his *Temptations* to cauſe us to neglect and caſt off Holy Duties, he will *Tempt* us to Pride our ſelves in the well performing of them; if he cannot make us fall, he will *Tempt* us to be high-minded becauſe we ſtand; and ſo make our very ſtanding the occaſion of our woful downfall; and becauſe we are apt to think our ſelves better than others, he will *Tempt* us to be ſupercilious Deſpiſers and Contemners of others.

Now, O Chriſtian, it is a very hard matter, and thou wilt find it ſo, thus to turn thee about to every Aſſault: and that Man had need to have his Spiritual Senſes well exerciſed, that ſhall be able dextrouſly to do it. Now when ſo great circumſpection is ſcarce ſufficient for our ſecurity, how can they poſſibly eſcape without fearful Wounds and Gaſhes in their Conſciences, who are ſupinely negligent of their Souls, and mind not which way their Thoughts, their Paſſions, their Affections encline, and ſo give the *Devil* a Handle to turn their Souls by which way he will? Certainly if we do not buckle our *Spiritual Armour* cloſe to us, but ſuffer the joynts of it by our heedleſsneſs to lie open, the *Devil* may eaſily wound us whereſoever and in whatſoever part he pleaſeth. And truly, if through this inadvertency and want of circumſpection, *Adam* in the State of *Innocency*, and the State of Uprightneſs fell, when the *Devil* had no immediate acceſs or admiſſion into the inward Faculties and Powers of his Soul: yet if *Satan*, who was but a young, unpractiſed, and unexperienced *Devil*, could prevail with him by his Wiles, to ruine himſelf, and to betray the great Truſt which God had depoſited in his Hands for all his Poſterity: How much greater may we think is his Advantage over us, into whom he may inſinuate himſelf and his *Temptations*; and when we are buſie about other things, ſtrike and wound us at unawares.

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Secondly, Beſides this inadvertency, the *Devil* hath another grand Advantage to lead us into *Evil*, and that is becauſe we are naturally prone and enclined of our ſelves to thoſe very Sins to which he Tempts us. It is very hard for that place to eſcape, that hath Enemies without and Traytors within. So ſtands the caſe with us, we are not only beleaguer'd, but betrayed; there are in our Hearts multitudes of Luſts that hold intelligence with the *Devil*, and eſpouſe his Cauſe; yea, there is no one Sin, how vile and profligate ſoever, but it may find Partiſans in our baſe and wicked Hearts, wherein are the Seeds and Principles of all Impieties; and therefore as things of a like Nature preſently concorporate, (as we ſee one drop of Water diffuſeth it ſelf and runs into another,) ſo *Temptations* to Sin meeting with a ſinful Nature are preſently entertained, and as it were embodyed together; for whilſt we purſue what *Satan* Tempts us unto, we do but purſue what our own Natural Luſts and Corruptions inclin'd unto before, waiting only for an opportunity of being called forth into Act.

And therefore conſidering both the Advantages the *Devil* hath againſt us, and the great Diſ-advantages under which we lie; he a Spirit, we but Fleſh; he wiſe and ſubtle, we fooliſh and ignorant; he experienced, we raw and unpractiſed; he diligent and watchful, we careleſs and negligent; he laying a cloſe ſiege to us without, and we betraying our ſelves within: It muſt needs be aſcribed only to the Goodneſs and Grace of God, to deliver us from the commiſſion of that *Evil*, to which we are ſo fiercely and cunningly *Tempted*.

And thus I have demonſtrated the *Propoſition*, That it is only the Almighty Power of God that can preſerve us from Sin. It now remains to ſhew you, the Ways and Methods that God takes to do it, and thoſe are in the General Three: By *reſtraining Providences*; by *common*

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and reſtraining Grace; and by *ſanctifying and renewing Grace.*

Firſt, God delivers us from *Evil*, by his *reſtraining Providence*, putting an Hook into Men's Noſtrils, and a Bridle into their Jaws, and by a powerful Hand reining them in when they are moſt fiery and furious. And thus he often doth with the worſt and vileſt of Men, whoſe Luſts though they eſtuate and boyl within, and are like the raging *Sea*, raging and rolling in their Hearts; yet God ſets bounds to their proud Waves, and ſaith to them as he doth to the great *Sea*, hitherto ſhall you proceed and no farther. It is to this we owe it, that the Wickedneſs of Men hath not yet made the World an uninhabitable *Deſart*, that *Solitudes* and *Wilderneſſes* are not as ſecure Retreats, as frequented Cities; and ſavage Beaſts as ſafe Company as Men. To this we owe it that almoſt every one is not a *Cain* to his Brother, an *Amnon* to his Siſter, a *Judas* to his Maſter, and a *Devil* to all the World; for where Grace doth not change, *Divine Providence* doth many times ſo Chain the Sinner, that he cannot bring forth that Wickedneſs he hath conceived; that although he be permitted Sin enough to deſtroy himſelf, which his very Will and Affection to Evil is ſufficient to do; yet through God's with-holding Opportunity or Abilities from him; his Sins are not permitted to break out to the ruine and deſtruction of others. Though God doth as it were permit them to give up their Hearts to the *Devil*, yet he ties up their Hands, let them imagine and intend as much miſchief as *Hell* can inſpire them with, yet none of all this ſhall they execute, any otherwiſe than as his Holy and Wiſe *Providence* permits: Yea, *Divine Providence* is effectual not only in keeping wicked Men from the outward Acts of Sin; but even God's deareſt Children and Servants they alſo have a great deal of Corruption ſtirring in their Hearts, and even in them Luſt is too fruitful, conceiving thoſe Wickedneſſes which God often

often by his *Providence* ſo ſtifles and ſtrangles in the very Birth. May not the beſt of us with thankful acknowledgements of the *Divine Goodneſs* towards us, reflect back upon many diſ-appointments that we have met with, to which we had given our conſent and entertained purpoſes of ſinning? May we not all ſay, Had not God denied Opportunities, or caſt in Diverſions, or cut off the Proviſions which we had made for our Luſts, we ſhould at ſuch or ſuch a time have diſhonoured the Goſpel, ſcandalized our Profeſſion, opened the Mouths of wicked and ungodly Men to blaſpheme the Holy and Reverend Name of God, and contracted to our own Conſciences black and horrid Guilt, by the commiſſion of ſome infamous Crimes, of which we were guilty by conſenting to them? God hath hedg'd up the *Broad-way* with Thorns, that ſo he might turn us into the *Narrow-way* that leads to Eternal Bliſs and Happineſs.

Now the particular Methods that *Divine Providence* makes uſe of to prevent the Sins of Men, are many and various, and all of them wiſe and juſt.

First, Sometimes God by his *Providence* cuts ſhort their *Power*, whereby they ſhould be enabled to Sin. All that *Power* that Wicked Men have, is either from themſelves, or their Aſſociates whom they make uſe of to accompliſh their Wickedneſs; and ſometimes *Divine Providence* ſtrikes them in both; it cuts off their Inſtruments for Counſel. And thus *Providence* over-ruling *Abſalom* to reject the politick Counſel of *Achitophel*, prevents all that miſchief that ſo Wiſe and ſo Wicked a *States-Man* might afterwards have contrived, upon which he goes home and hangs himſelf; and as if his *Sagacity* forſook him not in his Death, by that laſt Action gave a Prophetick *Omen* of his Maſters attending *Deſtiny*.

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Sometimes God cuts off their Inſtruments for execution: So God miraculouſly defeated the huge and vaſt Hoſt of the blaſpheming *Rabſhekah*, and by unſeen ſtrokes ſlew almoſt two hundred thouſand of them dead upon the place. Sometimes God immediately ſtrikes their Perſons, and diſables their Natural Faculties; ſo he ſmote the Men of *Sodom* with Blindneſs, and put out thoſe very Eyes that had kindled in them the Flames of unnatural Luſts: Thus likewiſe when *Jeroboam* had ſtretch'd forth his Hand to lay hold on the *Prophet*, God ſuddenly withers it up. Sometimes he hides their Wits from them and beſots them: So the *Jews*, in *Joh.* 7. 30. ſought to have apprehended *Jeſus*, and though he was in the very midſt of them, and there was enough of them to do it, yet God ſo aſtoniſhes them, that they only ſtand gazing on him, whilſt he paſſes through the Crowd of them and eſcapes away. And indeed it is a great Mercy of God to take away that Power from Men that he ſees they will only uſe to their own deſtruction. And though Wicked Men would think that if God ſhould now ſtrike them Dumb, or Blind, or Lame, or Impotent, that it would be a heavy Plague or Curſe inflicted upon them; yet believe it, it is far better that God ſhould ſtrike thee Dumb, than that ever thou ſhouldſt open thy Mouth, to rail at him and his People: Better thou wert ſtricken Blind, than that ever the *Devil* and filthy Luſts ſhould enter into thy Soul, by the Windows of thine Eyes: Better that thou wert maim'd, than that ever thou ſhouldſt have power to commit thoſe Sins which will damn, if but intended, but if executed will ſink the Soul ſeven fold deeper into damnation.

Secondly, Sometimes *Providence* prevents Sin, by raiſing up other oppoſite Powers againſt a Sinner. Thus God defeated the deſigns of the *Scribes* and *Rulers* who hated Chriſt, and oftentimes they would have put him to Death; but it is ſaid they feared the People, whom his Doctrine,

Doctrine, his Miracles, and his courſe of Life had obliged to himſelf. Inſtances of this nature are many, and occurr familiarly.

Thirdly, Sometimes *Providence* caſts in ſome ſeaſonable diverſion, which turns Men off from the Commiſſion of thoſe ſins which they had intended. Thus the Providential paſſing by of *Merchants*, induced the *Patriarchs* to ſell their Brother *Joſeph*, whom before they had determined to famiſh. As skilful Phyſicians, when one part of the Body is oppreſſed with ill and peccant humours, draw them to another part leſs dangerous. So God by his *Providence* many times turns Men from the Commiſſion of greater ſins to a leſſer ſin. And I believe there are but few Men, who if they will but ſeriouſly examine their lives, may produce may inſtances both of the *Devil*'s policy in fitting them with occaſions and opportunities of ſinning, and of God's *Providence* in cauſing ſome urgent Affairs, or ſome ſudden and unexpected *Accidents* to intervene, whereby they are turned off from what they purpoſed.

Fourthly, Sometimes by his *Providence* he takes off the *Objects* againſt which they intended to ſin. Thus God preſerved St. *Peter* from *Herod*'s Ambitious Rage. He intended the next morning to put him to *Death*, but that very night, God ſends his *Angel* to work his eſcape, and thereby hinders the execution of that wicked purpoſe. And thus in all Ages, God many times hides his Children from the fury of wicked Men, that their Wrath againſt them, like *Saul*'s *Javelin* miſſeth *David*, and ſtriketh only the Wall, from whence it often rebounds back into their own Faces.

Theſe now are ſome of the moſt remarkable Methods of *Divine Providence* in preventing the ſins of Men. And I am very prone to think that there are very few who if they will be at the pains to reflect back upon and ſtrictly examine that part of their lives that is paſt and gone, they may eaſily produce many remarkable inſtances, both of the

Devil's Policy in fitting them with opportunities and occaſions of ſinning, and of God's *Providences* in cauſing ſome immergent affairs, or ſome other ſtrange and unexpected accidents to interpoſe, ſo that he hath either Graciouſly taken away our power, or taken away the *Objects* of our Luſts, or diverted us when we were in the purſuits of them. To this we owe much of the innocency, and in ſome reſpects blameleſsneſs of our lives; that we have not been a ſcandal to the Goſpel, a ſhame to the Good, and a ſcorn to the Bad: and this is the *firſt* way how God preſerves from ſin by his *Providence*.

Secondly, God preſerves from ſin by his *reſtraining Grace*. Now this *reſtraining Grace* is that which is common and vouchſafed to wicked Men as well as good. Indeed God by it deals in a ſecret way with the very heart of a ſinner, and though he doth not change the habitual, yet he changeth the preſent actual diſpoſition of it; ſo as not only by external checks laid upon Mens Luſts, but by internal perſuaſions, motives, and arguments, they are taken off the proſecution of thoſe very ſins which yet remain in them unmortified and raigning. Thus *Eſau* comes out againſt his Brother *Jacob* with a Troop of two hundred *Ruffians*, intending doubtleſs to take revenge upon him for his *Birthright* and *Bleſſing*; but at their firſt meeting, God by a ſecret work ſo molliſies his heart, that inſtead of falling upon him to kill him, he falls upon his neck and kiſſes him. Here God reſtrain'd *Eſau* from that bloody ſin of *Murder*, not in a way of *External Providence* only, but with his own hand he immediately turns about his heart, and by ſeeing ſuch a company of *Cattel* bleating and bellowing, timorous *Women*, and helpleſs *Children* bowing and ſupplicating to him; he turns his Revenge into Compaſſion, and with much urging, receives a Preſent from him whom he thought to have made a Prey. The ſame powerful reſtraint God laid upon the heart of *Abimelech* a *Heathen* King, *Gen.*

20.

20. 6. where God tells him, *I with-held thee from ſinning againſt me, and therefore ſuffered I thee not to touch her.* Here was nothing viſible that might hinder *Abimelech*, but God inviſibly wrought upon his heart, and unhing'd his ſinful deſires. And from theſe two inſtances of *Eſau* and *Abimelech*, we may clearly collect, how *reſtraining Grace* differs both from *reſtraining Providence*, and from *Sanctifying Grace*: from *Providence* it differs, becauſe uſually when God *Providentially reſtrains* from ſin, he doth it by ſome viſible apparent means, which do not reach to work any change or alteration upon the heart, but only lays an external check upon Mens ſinful Actions. But by *reſtraining Grace*, God deals in a ſecret way with the very heart of a ſinner, and although he doth not change the nature of it, yet he alters the preſent inclination of it, and takes away the deſire of committing thoſe ſins which yet he doth not mortifie. And from *Sanctifying Grace* it differs alſo, in that God vouchſafes it to wicked Men and Reprobates, to the end that their Lives may be more plauſible, their Gifts more ſerviceable, and their Condemnation more intolerable. And indeed the efficacy of this *reſtraining Grace* may be ſo great that there may appear but very little difference between the Converſation of a true Chriſtian whom *Special Grace* Sanctifies, and the Converſation of one in a State of Nature whom common Grace only reſtrains: they may both live outwardly without blame or offence, avoiding the groſs pollutions of the World, and ſhine in a Sphere above the ordinary ſort of Men, and yet the one be a *Star*, and the other but a *Meteor*. The high-way may be as dry, and as fair, in a Froſty Winter, as in a warm Summer, but there is a great deal of difference in the cauſe of it: In Summer the Sun dries up the moiſture, in Winter the Froſt binds it in. So the ways of thoſe who have only a *reſtraint* laid upon them, may be as fair and clear as the ways of thoſe who are truly *Sanctified*, but the cauſe is vaſtly different; Grace

hath dried up the filth of the one, but ownly bound in the filth of the other.

Now God doth thus by his *reſtraining Grace* preſerve Men from ſin, by propounding to them ſuch Conſiderations and Arguments as may be ſufficient to engage Conſcience againſt it, when yet the Will and Affections are ſtill bent towards it. *Reſtraining Grace* thunders the Curſe of the Law, and brandiſheth the Sword of Juſtice in the Face of a ſinner, reports nothing but *Hell* and *Everlaſting Torments*, and ſuch terrible things which may ſcare Men from their ſins, though ſtill they love them. It is indeed a great Mercy of God to keep us from ſin, even by legal terrours, and uſually theſe are a good preparation and introduction for ſaving Grace. Doubtleſs, the thoughts and fears of *Hell*, have with very good ſucceſs been made uſe of to keep Men from thoſe ſins that lead unto *Hell*. But yet if in our conflicts againſt *Temptations*, we can draw Arguments from no other *Topicks* but *Hell* and *Eternal Death* and *Deſtruction*: If we cannot as well quench the *Fiery Darts* of the *Devil* in the *Blood of Jeſus Chriſt*, as in the *Lake* of *Fire* and *Brimſtone*; it is much to be doubted, whether our abſtaining from ſin be from any higher principle than what is common: only for fear of puniſhment, and not for love of God or Goodneſs.

Thirdly, God hath another method of keeping Men from ſin, and that is by his *Special* and *Sanctifying Grace*. And this is proper only to the Children of God who are really Sanctified and made Gracious. Now whatever ſin God doth thus preſerve any from, he doth it by exciting the inward principle and habit of Grace to the actual uſe and exerciſe of it. There is a Two-fold Grace always neceſſary to keep the beſt Chriſtians from ſin, *Habitual* and *Exciting*, and God by the one quickens and ſtirs up the other, which elſe would lie ſluggiſh and dormant.

Habitual

Habitual Grace denominates the Soul alive unto God, but it is no otherwiſe alive, than a Man in a ſwoon is; it is only *exciting* and *influential Grace* that can enable it to perform the Functions and Offices of Life. In the drearyeſt Winter there is life in a Seed that lies buried under ground, but it acts not till the *Sun*'s influence draws it forth; but then it heaves and ſhoves away the Earth that covered it, and ſpreads it ſelf into the Beauty of a Flower and Fruit. So is it here: *Inherent Habitual Grace*, is indeed an immortal Seed, and it is but a Seed till the influences of an approaching God awaken it, and chaſe its benumbed Virtue, and then it ſtirs and thruſts away all that dung and filth of corruption under which it lay buried, and flowers into *Actual Grace*. *Habitual* and *Influential Grace*, muſt both concurr to produce *Actual Grace*: as neceſſarily, as there muſt be both the concurrence of the heat of the *Sun*, and the Life of the *Root* to the production of a *Flower*. Now God by exciting the *Inherent* and *Habitual Grace*, which was before in the Soul, keeps Men from ſinning two ways.

Firſt, Hereby he prevents and excludes thoſe ſins which were we not employed in the exerciſe of Grace, we ſhould certainly commit. When the Soul is conſtantly employed in Holy and Spiritual Affairs, ſin then neither hath room nor opportunity to exert it ſelf. It is kept out of the thoughts when they are employed about Holy Meditations. It is kept out from the Affections, when they are ſet upon *Heavenly Objects*. It is kept out from the Converſation, when both the Duties of our general and particular Callings are duly performed in their reſpective Seaſons. The *Apoſtle* exhorts us, *Epheſ.* 4. 27. *Not to give place unto the Devil.* Truly, when God's *exciting Grace* quickens our *inherent Grace* to a continual Exerciſe: When every faculty is filled with Holy Actions, and every Seaſon with Holy Duties, the *Devil* then can have no place to tempt, nor corruption to ſtir. It is the beſt ſecurity God can give us from the Commiſſion

Commiſſion of Evil, to quicken us to the performance of what is good. When we *Hear*, *Pray*, or *Meditate*, or attend upon the *publick Ordinances*, we ought to bleſs God for this his *exciting Grace*, whereby we have not only performed a Duty, but alſo poſſibly eſcaped ſome foul and notorious ſin, which elſe we might have committed. We who are here this day before the Lord, had we neglected, (as ſo many others do) this preſent opportunity: who of us know what horrid *Temptations* and fearful *Sins*, we might in our *own Houſes* have been expoſed unto, which in *God's Houſe* we have avoided. *David* when he walked idly upon the Roof of his Houſe, lies open to the ſnares of the *Devil*, and falls into thoſe foul ſins of *Adultery* and *Murder*: Had he then been at his *Harp* and his *Pſalms*, he might thereby have driven the *Evil Spirit* from him, as formerly he was wont to do for his Maſter *Saul*. *Running Streams* preſerve themſelves clear and pure, whereas *ſtanding Puddles* ſoon grow corrupt, and breed noiſome and venomous Creatures. So is it with the *Heart*, whilſt God's *exciting and quickning Grace* puts it upon continual Exerciſe, it is preſerved from corruption: but when it once grows ſluggiſh, and doth not freely flow forth into the *actings of Grace* and the *performance of Duties*, the Spawn of all manner of ſins will breed there, and filthy Luſts crawl to and fro without diſturbance. And therefore in praying that God would *deliver us from evil*, we pray that he would continually vouchſafe unto us the quickning influences of his *Holy Spirit*, that he would always fill our Sails with that Wind that bloweth where it liſteth: *Awake, O North wind, and come thou South wind, and blow upon our Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow forth*: for indeed if the *Spices* do not, the *Stench* will.

Secondly, As God by his *exciting Grace* hinders thoſe ſins which might ariſe in the heart, ſo he ſuppreſſeth thoſe that do ariſe. There is the greateſt contrariety imaginable between

between *Inherent Grace* and *indwelling ſin* imaginable: When the one is vigorous, the other languiſheth; and both of theſe oppoſite principles have their ſeat in the ſame heart, and both of them are in a continual expectation of an exciting influence to call them out into Act. Indwelling corruption is uſually rouſed up by *Temptations*, and when it ſtirs in the Heart, and is ready to break forth into the Life; *Habitual Grace* is of it ſelf ſo feeble, that it cannot make any oppoſition, until a kindly influence from the Spirit of God, calls forth ſome particular Grace, that is moſt of all contrary unto it, to reſiſt and ſubdue it. This Method God uſed to keep St. *Paul* from ſinning: he was under a ſharp and pungent *Temptation*, which he calls a *Thorn in the Fleſh*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7. *Satan* buffets, and he prays, and God Anſwers, *My Grace is ſufficient for thee*; my Grace is ſufficient not thine: The Grace that is in thee, is weak and helpleſs, it is a very nothing if I withdraw my influence from it, but the quickning Grace that flows from me, this alone is ſufficient to remove the *Temptation*, and to prevent the ſin. Now whilſt God's *exciting Grace* works thus upon St. *Paul's inherent Grace*; this *Temptation*, this *Thorn* at his Breaſt (as they report of the *Nightingale*) only makes him the more wakeful and vigilant. But if God ſhould have ſuſpended his Gracious influence, this *Thorn* would ſadly have wounded his Conſcience, by the commiſſion of ſome foul and groſs ſin.

Now as all manner of ſin lies couched and comprehended in that body of ſin which we carry about with us. So all manner of Graces are couched alſo in that principle of Grace which God hath implanted in his own Children: And when the *Devil* by a *Temptation* calls forth a particular ſin, God alſo by his exciting influence, calls forth a particular contrary Grace to hinder the commiſſion of it. Thus when they are tempted to *Pride*, God calls forth *Humility* to prick that ſwelling and puffy bladder. So when they are tempted

to

to *Wrath* and *Paſſion*, he ſtirs up *Meekneſs* to oppoſe it. When a *Murmuring* and *Repining* at God's Diſpenſations, he puts *Patience* upon its perfect work. And in brief, there is no one ſin whatſoever, that the *Devil* can by his *Temptations* ſtir up in the Heart; but God alſo can and often doth, ſtir up a contrary Grace to quell and maſter it. But now there are *two Graces* which are more eſpecially employed in this Service; and they are an *awful fear*, and *filial Love* of God: And therefore when we pray that God would *deliver us from evil*, we pray.

Firſt, That he would ſo affect our Hearts with that dread and reverence of his Holy Majeſty, that we may not dare to commit the leaſt ſin, knowingly and willingly againſt him. For the *fear of God* is a powerful preſervative, to with-hold the Soul from conſenting to *Temptation*, and when we are fully poſſeſſed with it, we ſhall be able to return that Anſwer to every ſollicitation of the *Devil*, that *Joſeph* did to the filthy enticements of his lewd *Miſtreſs*, how ſhall we do this thing and ſin againſt God? Yea, it will preſerve us not only from the more groſs and ſcandalous acts of ſin, but from the ſecret lurking wickedneſſes that lie deep in the Heart. 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs and pollution both of Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the fear of God.* Indeed, where this *Fear* of God is deeply implanted, it will keep us from offending him in our Thoughts, as well as in our Actions. We ſhall be afraid to ſin againſt him by Hypocriſie or Unbelief, or Impenitency; as well as by Murder, or Blaſphemy, or any of thoſe flagitious Crimes, which not only the Law of God, but the Law of Nature and right Reaſon condemn.

Secondly, We pray that God would ſo affect our Hearts with a *Holy and filial Love* of himſelf, that may ſweetly and yet powerfully keep us from whatſoever may be an offence unto his *Divine Majeſty*. For Love would not willingly do any thing that may offend or grieve the *Object* loved.

loved. There is a Holy ingenuity in this Grace, that ſtrongly engageth the Heart to love what God loves, and to hate what he hates. Now the only *Object* of God's hatred is ſin; and therefore where the *Love of God* is implanted, it will cauſe ſuch a Divine Simpathy of Affection, that thoſe who *love the Lord, will hate ſin and iniquity*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *Pſalm* 97. 10. And certainly hatred of ſin is a moſt effectual means to keep us from committing of it. And thus I have ſhewn you the methods that God uſeth in delivering us from *Evil*. By his *reſtraining Providence*. By his *reſtraining Grace*. And by his *Sanctifying and renewing Grace*.

Hence then ſee to whom you are to aſcribe your preſervation from *Evil*, and from thoſe horrid ſins that others fall into. Sacrifice not to your own Net, not to the freedom of your own Wills, not to any excellency in your own diſpoſition and temper, not to your Natural Averſation to what is Wicked and Impious: But give the Praiſe and Glory both of what thou art, and of what thou art not, wholly unto God. Thy Nature is as ſinful as the worſt of Mens; and that thy Life is not as ſinful and wicked as the worſt, proceeds only from the Goodneſs and Grace of God which hath made the difference: yea, a difference little leſs than *Miraculous*; for is it not a *Miracle*, that when the Fountain is as bitter in our Hearts, as in the Hearts of others, yet that the Streams ſhould not be ſo? Whence is it that ſince we have the ſame corrupt Hearts with *Cain* and *Judas*, or any of the moſt branded Wretches in the World for Sin and Wickedneſs; that yet we have not committed the like Impieties with them; but that God hath either *reſtrained* or *Sanctified* us? But Sanctifying Grace of it ſelf is not enough; for whence is it then that we have not committed the ſame ſins that thoſe have done, who yet have been Sanctified; whoſe foul ſins and ſad miſcarriages, are Recorded for our warning: Are we more *Holy* than they?

Have we obtained a greater meaſure of *Sanctification* than they? No, only our Gracious God by vouchſafing us a conſtant influence of his *exciting Grace*, hath been pleaſed to keep us from thoſe ſins, into which he ſuffers wicked Men to fall, and not only them, but ſometimes his own dear Children alſo. Well then let not the ſtrong Man Glory in his ſtrength, but let him that Glorieth, Glory in the Lord; for he is our Strength and our Deliverer: *What have we that we have not received, and if we have received it, why ſhould we boaſt as if we had not received it?* It is not what we have already received, but what we are continually receiving from God that makes us to differ from the vileſt and moſt profligate ſinners in the World.

And thus much ſhall ſuffice for the way and method how God doth *deliver us from evil*. Now that which we pray for in this *Petition*, is,

Firſt, That if it ſhall pleaſe God to *lead us into Temptation*, yet that he would not leave us under the power of *Temptation*, but with *every Temptation he would make a way for us to eſcape, that we may be able to bear it.*

Secondly, That if at any time *Temptation* ſhould get the upper hand, and prevail over us to the commiſſion of ſin, yet that God would not leave us under the power of that ſin but raiſe us up again by true repentance and Godly ſorrow, that ſo at laſt we may be delivered from the great and ſoul-damning evil of obduration and impenitency.

Thirdly, That God would not only deliver us from groſs and ſelf-condemning impieties, but from every evil way and work, and preſerve us blameleſs to the Heavenly Kingdom of his Son.

Fourthly, That he would be pleaſed not only to deliver us from that which is in it ſelf *evil*, but from all the occaſions and all the *appearances of evil*, for theſe alſo are *evil*, if not in effect, yet in tendency.

And thus now I have finiſhed the ſixth and laſt *Petition* of this moſt Excellent and Divine Prayer of our Saviour: And I nothing doubt, but in the Diſcourſes I have made of it, you have ſeen it verified what at firſt I affirmed of it; that it is a comprehenſive ſummary of all that we can ask of God, whether it be for ſupplies of our Temporal or Spiritual wants, and that all other Prayers which we make are but a commentary upon this, drawing that out at length, which here is cloſely wound up in one bottom.

This Prayer of our Saviour now expounded unto you, conſiſts, as I told you in the beginning, of four parts.

Firſt, The Preface or Introduction, *Our Father.*

Secondly, The Requeſts or Petitions, which are ſix.

Thirdly, The *Doxology* or *Praiſe.* And then,

Fourthly, The Concluſion or Ratification of all in the Word, *Amen.* The two firſt I have diſpatched: I now come to the

Third, and that is the *Doxology* or *Praiſe*; for Praiſe is a neceſſary part of Prayer: This Praiſe now is here aſcribed unto God, by aſcribing unto him his Attributes, *Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory for ever.* In which words four of God's *Attributes* are mentioned and aſcribed unto him.

Firſt, His Sovereignty, *Thine is the Kingdom.*

Secondly, His Omnipotency, *thine is the Power.*

Thirdly, His Excellency, *thine is the Glory.*

Fourthly, His Eternity, all theſe are thine *for ever.*

The *Kingdom* is thine for ever. The *Power* is thine for ever. The *Glory* is thine for ever. For ſo this Particle *for ever*, is to be diſtributed unto each of the foregoing *Attributes.* Now in aſcribing unto God theſe Attributes, we may conſider, the Eminency, and the Propriety of them.

The Eminency of them in the *Particle The*, *The Kingdom*, *The Power*, *The Glory*, denoting to us the higheſt and the chiefeſt of all theſe: For *his Kingdom* is that which ruleth

over all. *His Power*, that which no Created Power can controul. *His Glory*, ſuch as ſtains all other Excellencies, and makes all their Light and Luſtre to be only the Shadow of God.

The propriety of this Attribute in this Particle, *Thine*: though others may have *Kingdoms*, and *Power*, and *Glory*; yet theſe in their Eminency belong only unto God; they are thine, and thine only, Originally, Infinitely, and Unchangeably.

Now all theſe Attributes of God are annexed to the *Petitions* of this Prayer by the illative Particle *For*: *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory.* And this carries in it the ſtrength and force of a Reaſon, both why we pray unto God, and likewiſe why God ſhould grant us thoſe things that we pray for.

Firſt, We pray unto God: for his is the *Kingdom*, and the *Power*, and the *Glory for ever*, and therefore he alone is able to relieve and ſupply us.

Secondly, We plead for the obtaining of thoſe good things which we ask of him; therefore grant them unto us, *For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory for ever.* This adds ſtrong Conſolation and Aſſurance to our Faith, that we ſhall be heard in theſe requeſts that we preſent to God. For,

Firſt, His *is the Kingdom*, and we are his *Subjects*, and therefore we may depend upon him as our *King* for help and protection.

Secondly, His *is the Power*, and therefore he is able to ſupply and help us, and to do abundantly for us above what we can ask or think.

Thirdly, *His is the Glory*, and therefore ſince what we ask is for his Honour and Praiſe, we may firmly believe our requeſts ſhall be granted unto us. And,

Fourthly, All theſe are his *for ever*, and therefore we may reſt aſſured that at no time our Prayers ſhall be in vain.

But

But as it is the ſame unchangable God who in former Ages hath done great things for, and given great things unto his Servants who have called upon him; ſo he ſtill retains the ſame Power and the ſame Compaſſion, his Ear is not heavy, nor his Arm ſhortned, nor his Bowels withered: and therefore we may with aſſurance expect that he will ſupply our wants, and grant our deſires, ſince the Treaſures of his Mercy are for ever unexhauſted. Thus every word is a forcible Reaſon, both to oblige us to Addreſs our ſelves unto God, and likewiſe to move him to beſtow upon us thoſe good things which we thus ask at his hands. And from hence by the way, we may obſerve two things.

Firſt, That in our Prayers we ought to plead with God by weighty and enforcing *Reaſons*.

Secondly, That the moſt forcible *Reaſons* in Prayer are to be taken from the Attributes of God.

Firſt, That in our Prayers we ought to plead with God by weighty and enforcing *Reaſons*. Thus God bids us to, *Take unto our ſelves words, and to turn unto him*, Hoſea 14. 2. And thus if we look into *Scripture*, thoſe Prayers of the Saints which are there Recorded, we ſhall find them Diſputes (if I may ſo call them) as well as Requeſts, and ſo many Reaſons urged in them, as if by dint of Arguments, they would conſtrain God to yield to their deſires. So in *Moſes*'s Prayer, *Exod.* 32. 11. *Wherefore doth thy Wrath wax hot againſt thy People, which thou haſt brought forth out of the Land of Ægypt with great Power? wherefore ſhould the Ægyptians ſay, for miſchief did he bring them out to ſlay them in the Mountains, and to conſume them from the Face of the Earth? Turn thee from thy fierce Wrath and repent of this Evil againſt thy People. Remember Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob thy Servants, to whom thou ſwareſt by thine own ſelf, and ſaidſt unto them, I will multiply your Seed as the Stars of Heaven, and all this Land that I have ſpoken of will I give unto your Seed, and they ſhall inherit it for ever.*

ever. And ſo *Joſhua* pleads with God, *Joſh.* 7. 8. *O Lord, what ſhall I ſay when Iſrael turneth their backs before their Enemies! for the Canaanites and all the Inhabitants of the Land ſhall hear of it, and ſhall environ us round and cut off our Name from the Earth, and what wilt thou do unto thy great Name?* And ſo *Jehoſhaphat*, 2 Chron. 20. 6. *O Lord God of our Fathers, art not thou God in Heaven, and ruleſt thou not over all the Kingdoms of the Heathens, and in thy Hand is there not Power and Might, ſo that none is able to withſtand thee?* And ſo in the following *verſes*, he pleads with God by ſuch powerful *Arguments*, as if he would extort Mercy and Deliverance from him. Now although it be true that all the Arguments we can urge, and all the Reaſons that we can alledge, cannot alter the purpoſes and determinations of God, as to any Event that he hath ordained; yet there is this two-fold uſe and neceſſity of pleading them.

Firſt, Becauſe by conſidering the Reaſons we have to pray for ſuch Mercies, our deſires will be the more earneſt and fervent for the obtaining of them: It will put Spirits and Life into our *Petitions*, when we can repreſent to God the neceſſity of our asking, which to his Mercy will prove a ſtrong motive for his granting.

Secondly, Becauſe Reaſons in Prayer do mightily conduce to the ſtrengthning of our Faith, and gives us great encouragement to believe that we ſhall certainly obtain what we have ſo much reaſon to ask. Now Faith and Aſſurance of obtaining our Requeſt is a great Condition to the Acceptation of our Prayers: And therefore the *Apoſtle* commands us, *to lift up Holy Hands*, as *without Wrath*, ſo alſo *without doubting*, 1 Tim. 2. 8. and again *Jam.* 1. 7. *Let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering; for let not that Man think that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord.* Now when we can humbly repreſent unto God, both the great neceſſity that we ſtand in of thoſe Mercies that we beg, and likewiſe the equity which ariſeth, either from his Promiſes paſt, or his

his *Name* and *Attributes* proclaimed, that we ſhould receive them: What abundant Strength and Confidence may this add to our Faith, and make us come to God with an humble expectation, that he would either Anſwer our Prayers or our Reaſons? And therefore if thou wouldſt be ſure to have thy Prayers anſwered, pray chiefly for ſuch things for which thou canſt produce ſuch *Reaſons* as cannot be anſwered. And therefore,

Secondly, The moſt forcible *Reaſons* and *Arguments* in Prayer are to be taken from the *Attributes of God*. Theſe muſt needs be powerful when they are himſelf: And if thou canſt but get an *Attribute* to take thy part when thou comeſt to the Throne of Grace, and if thou canſt but rightly uſe and fit it to thy requeſts, thou may'ſt be ſure of ſpeeding; for God will not, nay he cannot deny himſelf. In us there can be nothing found to move him, nor any where out of himſelf; and where we find (as very often we do in *Scripture*) that the Miſeries and Afflictions of God's People are made uſe of as a Plea for Mercy, yet this Plea it ſelf which is uſually moſt winning and moſt affecting, can no otherwiſe prevail with God than as his Pity and Compaſſions engage him to relieve thoſe that are in Miſery. And to ſpeak properly, they are not our Afflictions, but the Glory of his Power and Mercy in delivering us from them, that is a motive unto God: Only it is the art of a Praying Chriſtian aptly to repreſent himſelf as an *Object*, for God's *Attributes* to be exerciſed about. And if he can but intereſt any *Name* or *Attribute* of God in his behalf, he may be confident of the ſucceſs of his Prayer, and that he ſhall not return aſhamed. Theſe two Obſervations I gather from the illative Particle, *for*: *For thine is the Kingdom*, &c.

Concerning the *Kingdom of God* I ſhall ſpeak but very little now, having already treated of it in explaining the *Second Petition* of this moſt excellent Prayer, *Thy Kingdom come*.

come. Certain it is, that God's *Universal Kingdom* is here understood, as he is the High Creator, and Supreme Lord of all things both in Heaven and in Earth; yet not so as to exclude his *peculiar Kingdom of the Church.* And this is an excellent Argument to confirm our Faith for the obtaining of those things which we pray for; because the Kingdom is Gods, and he is the absolute Sovereign over all; and therefore all things are at his dispose. As for Spiritual Blessings which we seek, he hath the Power of bestowing of them; for he is *King* of his *Church*, and bestows the Gifts and Graces of his Spirit upon the Faithful *Subjects* of that his *Kingdom.* And as for Temporal Blessings that we beg, he likewise can readily bestow them upon us; for he is the Universal *Monarch* of all the World, a *King* to whom all other Kings are subject, and all other *Thrones* are but the Footstool of his.

And therefore, in the general, whatsoever we want, be it Protection or Provision, our Faith in the *Sovereignty* of God may encourage us to ask it with an humble boldness and confidence; for it is the Office of a *King* to give both unto his Subjects.

But let us more particularly consider how *God's Kingdom* may be accommodated to all the *Petitions* of this Prayer of our Lord, as a strong Argument and Reason to prevail with God for the obtaining what we request in each of them.

First, The *Kingdom* is God's, therefore he will see that his *Name be hallowed and glorified* in it. *Kings* are jealous of their Honour, and it is a great Offence either to speak or do any thing that may redound to their discredit. It is fit and decent for a King to have the highest Name, and the greatest repute among his *Subjects.* And therefore we may be sure God will maintain this in the World; yea so jealous is God of having dishonour reflected upon him, that he hath forbidden not only the profanation and trivial men-

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tion of his own *Name*, but the profanation of that which doth but belong unto him. *Matth.* 5. 34, 35. *Swear not by Heaven, for it is God's Throne; neither by the Earth, for it is his Foot-ſtool; neither by Jeruſalem, for it is the City of the Great King.* Heaven is the Throne of his *Majeſty*, the Theatre of his Power: *Jeruſalem* and the *Temple* the Seat of his Worſhip. And therefore as *Kings* and *Princes*, have reſpect ſhown to their *preſence Chamber*: So God, becauſe he is the Great *King* of Kings, and *Lord* of Lords, requires to be reverenced in all that doth appertain unto him, and he will be ſanctified in all that draw near unto him. Thoſe who will not actually hallow him by their Obedience, on them God will be hallowed paſſively by their Puniſhment. And becauſe he is a *King* he will maintain the Honour of his *Majeſty* and Royalty: And therefore we may with Faith pray, *Hallowed be thy Name*: *For thine is the Kingdom*, &c.

Secondly, The *Kingdom is God's*, and therefore this *Kingdom ſhall come*, it ſhall be maintained, it ſhall be eſtabliſhed, it ſhall be enlarged and increaſed. Is it not the higheſt concern of a *King* to look that his *Kingdom* be not overthrown, and himſelf depoſed and outed of it? So is it God's intereſt and concernment to preſerve his *Kingdom* from the incurſion of Enemies, and the ſad conſequences of the Rents and Diviſions of his *Subjects*. He hath promiſed that the *Gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt it*, that he will enlarge the Borders of it, and give all Nations unto Jeſus Chriſt for his Inheritance and Poſſeſſion. And therefore when we pray, *Thy Kingdom come*, we may very well expect that our Requeſts ſhould be granted; for the *Kingdom* is *God's*, and we do but pray that he would regard his own Intereſt and Concerns, that he would *look down from Heaven and viſit this Vine which his own Right Hand hath planted, that neither the Wild Boar out of the Foreſt may root it up, nor the cunning Foxes pluck off its tender Grapes.*

Thirdly, The *Kingdom is God's*, and therefore we may well pray, *That his Will may be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*: For what is *Sovereignty* without Obedience to it but a mere Pageantry, a mock-ſhew of idle Royalty? It is but fit and rational to pray that his Will ſhould be done whoſe the Kingdom is. And whilſt we thus pray we may be confident of being heard and accepted, ſince the Reaſon we urge is ſo natural and preſſing.

Fourthly, The *Kingdom is God's*, and therefore we may with great encouragement to our Faith, pray for *Our daily Bread*, and all thoſe Temporal Accommodations that are needful and expedient for us: For it is a *Kingly Office* to provide things neceſſary for their *Subjects*; to protect and defend them, to ſupply and relieve them; and therefore, *Pſal.* 72. where we have a perfect Character of a good *King*, it is ſaid, verſe 6. *He ſhall come down like rain upon the mown graſs, and as ſhowers that Water the Earth.* That is, he ſhall be to his People as ſoft Showers to the ſprouting Graſs, kindly nouriſhing it, and making it grow and flouriſh. And certainly God who is the greateſt and beſt of *Kings*, will be ſo much more to his People and Subjects; and ſince he hath aſſumed to himſelf the Style and Name of *King*, he will provide abundantly for their Peace and Proſperity.

Fifthly, The *Kingdom is God's*, and therefore we may well make our applications to him for *Pardon*, and beg of him the *Forgiveneſs of our Offences*, ſince it is the Prerogative Royal of *Kings* to forgive Offenders. Hence our Saviour deſcribing the Proceſs of the General Judgment, when he comes to ſpeak of pronouncing the Sentence of Abſolution upon Believers, ſtyles himſelf *King*, ſo we read *Matth.* 25. 34. *Then ſhall the King ſay to them on his Right Hand, Come ye Bleſſed of my Father inherit the Kingdom.* So that here our Faith hath a very ſtrong Plea to urge with God for the Pardon of our Sins, *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes*:

For

For thine is the Kingdom; and it belongs to the Royalty of thy Kingdom to forgive humble and penitent Suppliants.

Sixthly, The *Kingdom is God's*, therefore we may well pray in Faith, that he would *Deliver us from Evil*: For this is one great end of Government, to protect their Subjects from the Aſſaults of their Enemies. And God, who is our *King*, will not neglect this care, when we do with an humble Faith urge him to it, by repreſenting to him that the *Kingdom* is his; for his intereſt is involved in the ſafety and welfare of his People.

And thus I have briefly ſhown you in general, that all our Prayers ought to be enforced with ſtrong and cogent Reaſons, which although they are not properly motives unto God, yet are they good grounds for our Faith to build upon, and therefore a good Evidence when we uſe them, that our *Petitions* ſhall be heard and granted. And I have likewiſe particularly accommodated this *firſt* Motive and Argument, taught us by our Saviour, *Thine is the Kingdom*, to each of the *Six Petitions*, which he hath inſtructed us to preſent to God.

The Second Attribute that we are to conſider, as a Reaſon and Motive urged in this Prayer, is the Power of God: *Thine is the Power.*

Now *Power*, according to the uſual acceptation of the Word, is nothing elſe but an ability to work thoſe Changes and Mutations upon created Beings, which were not in them before; I ſpeak only of *Active Power*, and the Two Terms of it are, either the effecting of ſomewhat that was not, or the annulling and deſtroying of that which was: This is the Notion of *Power*, whether it be aſcribed to God or Man; and in both it is either *Abſolute*, or *Ordinate*. *Abſolute Power* reſpects the ſimple ability of acting; *Ordinate Power* reſpects alſo the will and determination to act. And therefore in God, whoſe *Power* we are now treating of,

his *Abſolute Power* is of a much larger extent, than his *Ordinate*, for the one relates to all things poſſible, that is to all things whoſe exiſtence doth not imply a contradiction, the other relates only to things future, and this likewiſe ſuch as ſhall exiſt according to the common courſe and method of God's *Ordinary Providence*: for *Miraculous* effects although they are produced according to the Will and Ordination of God, yet they appertain not to his *Ordinate*, but to his *Abſolute Power*. So then the *Objects* of God's *Abſolute Power* are things merely poſſible, or things future; which are without the Compaſs and Sphere of ſecond cauſes to produce. But the *Objects* of God's *Ordinate Power* are things future, produced according to the Laws of Natural Agents, and the Virtue of ſecond Cauſes. Yet both theſe Powers in God are infinite, the one Objectively, the other Formally.

Firſt, God's *Abſolute Power* is *Objectively* infinite, that is, the *Object* of it is infinite; for all things poſſible are the *Object* of this *Power*, and all things are in themſelves poſſible, which do not imply a contradiction: And Oh how vaſt and incomprehenſible is the ſum of theſe! God might have Created more *Worlds*, more *Angels*, and *Men* than he hath done; more ſorts of Creatures, and more of every ſort, if he had ſo pleaſed. Yea, and he might have been Creating and Acting from all Eternity to all Eternity; and in his infinite duration be ſtill producing new, and therefore infinite effects; *for with God nothing is impoſſible*, Luke 1. 37. And the only Reaſon why God hath produced ſuch effects and no other, ſo many and not more, is not from want of Power, but merely from the free determination of his own Will and Counſel. He might have hindred the *Fall* of Man, reſtored the fallen *Angels*, raiſed the *Stones* to be *Children* unto *Abraham*, brought more Deluges and general Plagues upon the World, if he had ſo pleaſed: Yea, and though our fancy and imagination hath a large *Empire*, and

ſeems

ſeems boundleſs in theſe Fictions and Pourtraictures of things which we Paint and Limn there: yet God can really Create more than we can only imaginarily Create, for we can only patch together thoſe things which we have ſeen, or have otherwiſe been the *Objects* of our Senſes, and by putting together ſeveral pieces of things really exiſting, make an *Idea* of that which never was. But God can actually cauſe thoſe *Species* and kinds of beings in the World which never were, nor ever was there a former reſemblance of them, and ſo can infinitely exceed the largeſt ſcope of what in us ſeems moſt unlimitted, even our Thoughts and Fancies, for he is able to do above what we are able to think.

Secondly, God's *Ordinate Power* is infinite formally, that is, thoſe things which he works according to the Counſel of his own Will they are all effected by infinite Power; for tho' the *Objects* themſelves are finite, both for nature and number, yet the Power that produceth them is infinite: for ſince the Eſſence of God is infinite, and each of his Attributes is his Eſſence, it follows likewiſe that his Power is infinite, even in the production of things that are finite. Now it appears that the Power of God is infinite,

Firſt, By the Works of Creation; for though the things that are Created are finite, and but a few in compariſon with thoſe that are poſſible, yet it is no leſs than the infinite Power of God that can impregnate the vaſt Womb of nothing, and make it bring forth a Being. It muſt needs be an Almighty Word that can call forth a Creature out of non-exiſtence, and make it ſtart up into the rank of things that are. And therefore we find God often aſcribing it to himſelf as a Glorious demonſtration of his Almighty Power, that he ſpreads forth the Curtains of the Heavens, that he laid the Beams of the Earth, that he hung out thoſe Glorious Lights of the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*, that he breathed forth all the various ſorts of the Creatures which People the Univerſe, and by the commanding Word of his Mouth they

they were made: His Power and his Hand formed all thoſe Beautiful Creatures we behold, out of a rude and confuſed *Chaos*, and that *Chaos* it ſelf out of the greater confuſion of Nothing: And although ſecond Cauſes by their Power and Natural Energy, introduce various forms into things, yet all the matter they have to work upon, was firſt God's Workmanſhip, and there is nothing made by Man but it is the Creature of God, at leaſt as to the matter and firſt principle of it. Now, it is only infinite Power that can bring ſomething out of nothing; yea, and it is infinite Creating Power that can form things out of matter utterly indiſpoſed to receive the ſtamps of ſuch Natures as God imprints upon them: For no Created *Agent* can work either where there is nothing to work upon, or where it is altogether unfit and uncapable naturally to be form'd into ſuch a Being as the *Agent* intends. And therefore the *Apoſtle* tells us, *Rom.* 1. 20. *That the inviſible things of God from the Creation of the World, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and God-head.*

Secondly, The infinite Power of God is demonſtrated in thoſe Miraculous effects which have been extraordinarily produced in the World. It muſt needs be an Almighty Arm that can Arreſt the courſe and *impetus* of Nature, and turn it quite contrary to its own Byaſs: For no Created Power either in Heaven or Earth can by their own efficacy work a *Miracle*; nay they cannot be ſo much as Natural Inſtruments, but only Moral in the production of what is *Miraculous*. Indeed *Angels* both good and bad may produce very ſtrange and marvellous things by their ſuddain, inviſible, and effectual applying of proper Actives to Paſſives. And by ſuiting the ſecret and unknown Virtues of Cauſes to fit and diſpoſed Patients. But they cannot produce any thing that is Miraculous, and wholly either above or contrary to the Courſe and Sphere of Nature. And thoſe Men who have been ſo highly dignified as to be the Moral Inſtruments

ments of *Miracles*, (as we ſay that *Moſes* and *Elijah* and the *Apoſtles* of Chriſt wrought many *Miracles*) yet they did not perform thoſe Works by any Natural or proper Phyſical influence; but only by their Prayers and commanding Faith: It is God alone that is the immediate efficient cauſe of whatſoever events have been *Miraculous* in the World. And therefore when ſome raiſed the *Dead*, and others cured the *Blind* and *Lame*, when *Moſes* firſt cleft the *Sea* and afterwards the *Rock* with his wondrous *Rod*, when *Joſhua* ſtopt the *Sun* in its courſe, and *Iſaiah* turn'd it ten degrees backward: all theſe extraordinary and ſupernatural effects, are no otherwiſe to be aſcribed unto them, than as to remote inſtruments, who by their Prayers and Interceſſions prevailed with God to manifeſt his Power, as an atteſtation of that Commiſſion they had received from him. His *Infinite Power* is the ſole Author of them, and to this end hath he wrought them, that thoſe who take little notice of his *Power*, in the common and ordinary products of it, may be ſeized with admiration and aſtoniſhment, when they hear of ſuch events, as neither *Reaſon* nor *Nature* can give any account of, and may be forced to acknowledge with the *Magicians* of *Ægypt*, that it is the *Finger of God*. Or more Religiouſly with the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 89. 13. *Thou haſt a mighty Arm, ſtrong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.*

Thirdly, The *Power* of God is infinite even in the common courſe and effects of his Providence. Whatſoever comes to paſs is through the infinite Power of God. There is not the leaſt ſpire of graſs that ſprouts out of the *Earth*, not the leaſt Atom that plays and wanders to and fro in the *Air*, not any motion of any Creature how inconſiderable ſoever it be, but the *Almighty Power* of God is to be ſeen in it. For although one ſecond Cauſe may depend upon another in a long *Series*, yet are they all ultimately reſolved into the *firſt Cauſe* of all, and invigorated by his influence. See for this, *Hoſea* 2. 21. *I will hear the Heavens, ſaith*

ſaith the Lord, and they ſhall hear the Earth, and the Earth ſhall hear the Corn and the Wine and the Oyl, and they ſhall hear Jezreel. Be the Chain of *ſecond Cauſes* never ſo long, yet God holds the firſt link in his own hands, and conveys his *Power* through them all to their laſt effects. So that if we duly ponder the Myſteries and Wonders of *Nature*, it will appear that it is as much *Infinite Power* to make a poor *Worm* to crawl, or a *Sparrow* to fly or to fall to the Earth, as it was at firſt to Create the World. It requires no more *Power* in God to work *Miracles*, than the moſt ordinary and common events that happen; only thoſe are ſaid to be *Miracles* which are againſt or above the courſe of Nature, and thoſe to be Natural Events which are according to it; but to a conſidering Mind, both the one and the other do equally declare the Almighty and Infinite *Power* of God.

Now this Power is in the *Text* aſcribed to God by way of *Emphaſis* and Eminency: *Thine is the Power*, which notes unto us ſome peculiarity in the *Power* of God, which diſtinguiſheth it from all *Created Powers* whatſoever, and it conſiſts in theſe following things.

Firſt, In that the *Power of God* is infinite, (as hath been demonſtrated already) but the *Power* of all Creatures is only finite and limitted. God's *Abſolute Power* hath no bounds; but whatſoever is poſſible to be, he is able to produce. His *Ordinate* and *Actual Power* is indeed limitted, but only by his own Will. *Pſal.* 115. 3. *He hath done whatſoever he pleaſed.* But our wills are often limitted by our Power, and thoſe things which we wiſh the accompliſhment of, yet many times fail in taking effect, only becauſe we want Might and Power to bring them to paſs. And therefore when we aſcribe *Power* unto God, *Thine is the Power*, we Attribute unto him a *Power* that is infinite, a *Power* which can effect whatſoever his Will hath fore-determined, above, yea and contrary to all the *Power* of all the Creatures both in Heaven and Earth. Hence it is called, *The exceeding greatneſs of his Power*, Epheſ. 1. 19. Secondly,

Secondly, The *Power* of God is *Originally* in himſelf: But all *Created Powers* are only derived from him. Whatſoever is in God is, (according to the known Rules of the Schools) God himſelf. And therefore as God hath not his being from any other, ſo neither hath he his Power from any other. But whatſoever ability is found in any of the Creatures is from God, whether it be Natural or Moral Power, Strength or Authority.

Firſt. All derive their Natural Power from God. It is he that endues them with ſtrength, and with all that force and might which they enjoy. 1 *Chron.* 29. 12. *In thy hand is power and might, in thy hand it is to make great and to give ſtrength unto all.*

Secondly, All derive their Moral Power and Authority from God. *Prov.* 8. 15, 16. *By me Kings Reign and Princes decree Juſtice, by me Princes Rule and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth*: ſays the Eſſential Wiſdom of the Father.

Thirdly, The *Power of God is Supreme*, all other *Power* is but ſubordinate unto him: And therefore he can weaken the ſtrength and fruſtrate the attempts of all that ſhall combine themſelves together againſt him; for his Power is ſuch as no Creature can reſiſt. And as *Billows* do but daſh themſelves in pieces, by daſhing againſt the *Rock*: So all the united force of Nature, ſhould they make head againſt God, would but daſh themſelves in pieces, by daſhing againſt the *Rock of ages*, whoſe Counſels and Purpoſes ſhall ſtand firm, though all the World diſſent from them, and endeavour to oppoſe them; yea, the Power of God is ſo abſolute and ſovereign, that the greateſt Created Powers are but Inſtruments for God to make uſe of to bring about his own deſigns; and therefore they are compared to *Axes*, and *Saws*, and *Staves*, Eſai. 10. 15. *Shall the Ax boaſt it ſelf againſt him that heweth therewith? or ſhall the Saw magnifie it ſelf againſt him that ſhaketh it?* Yea, in *verſe* 5. God is ſaid to take up a great King

and a great Nation, only as a Rod to Chaſtiſe his People with, *O Aſſyrian, the Rod of mine anger, and the Staff in their hand is mine indignation.* And as a *Staff*, a *Rod*, or an *Ax*, cannot move themſelves without the hand and guidance of him that makes uſe of them: So neither can the Mightieſt *Princes*, nor the moſt Powerful People move themſelves but by the Power and Direction of God, who applies them as ſo many Tools or Inſtruments to whatſoever work he pleaſeth.

Now upon all theſe Accounts Power may be thus eminently aſcribed unto God. *Thine is the Power.*

Yet when we affirm God's Power to be thus *Sovereign* and *Infinite*, it doth not therefore follow, that it muſt take all things whatſoever within its reach and extent; for there are ſeveral things, which as St. *Auſtin* ſpeaks, *lib. 5. de Civitate Dei*, cap. 10. God cannot do becauſe he is Omnipotent. *Quædam Deus non poteſt, quia eſt Omnipotens.*

Firſt, God *cannot do the things that are contradictory.* He cannot Will the ſame thing to be and not be at the ſame time. That there ſhould be a Body without quantity, or any other Corporeal property belonging to it, as the *Papiſts* abſurdly dream in their Monſtrous Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*; for when they have recourſe to the *Almighty Power* of God, by which they ſay, That thoſe things which are naturally impoſſible, may be effected: As for the ſame Body to be in ten thouſand places at once: For the ſame Body to have *quantity* (as it hath in Heaven) and no *quantity* as in the *Sacrament*. We truly Anſwer, that the *Power* of God never reacheth to verifie contradictions; and that it is as great a contradiction to affirm a Body to be in more places than one at once, or to be and not to have quantity, eſpecially to have it, and not to have it; as it is to affirm that it is a Body and no Body.

Secondly,

Secondly, God *cannot do any thing which may juſtly bring upon him the imputation of ſin*; for ſin is not from Power, but from Weakneſs: ſince all Impiety conſiſts of defect, and all defect is from impotence. And therefore the *Apoſtle* tells us, *James* 1. 13. *God cannot be tempted with evil.* Holineſs and Purity is an eſſential *Attribute* of the *Divine Eſſence*; and therefore God can as ſoon not be, as be the Author of ſin, for all ſin muſt ariſe, either from weakneſs in the underſtanding, or perverſeneſs in the Will: but the *Divine Underſtanding* is infinitely clear, and therefore cannot be dazled with the falſe ſhews and appearances of evil; and the *Divine Will* is infinitely Holy, and conformed to the Sovereign Rule of his Sapience and Wiſdom. And therefore where there is no poſſibility of ignorance in the one, nor of irregularity in the other, there can be no obliquity in thoſe Actions which proceed from both, but they muſt all needs be moſt Holy, Juſt, and Righteous.

Thirdly, *God cannot do any thing that argues him mutable and unconſtant.* He cannot change his purpoſes, nor break his Promiſes, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his Lips. And tho' the *Scripture* makes frequent mention of God's *Repenting* himſelf of what he hath done: So we read *Gen.* 6. 6. *It repented the Lord that he made Man.* Exod. 32. 19. *The Lord repented of the Evil that he thought to do unto his People.* 2 Sam. 24. 16. *And the Lord repented him of the evil.* Yet theſe and ſuch like expreſſions are ſpoken only by way of Accommodation to our Capacities, and ſpoken συμπαθῶς καὶ ἀνθρωπίνως, compaſſionately and after the manner of Men, but muſt be underſtood, θεοπρεπῶς after ſuch a manner as is befitting God. For as Men when they repent of what they have made, do again deſtroy it, and act contrary to their former actings: So becauſe God doth ſometimes act contrary to his former actings, he is ſaid to *Repent* of what he had done; although in ſtrict propriety of Speech, the im-

mutability of his *Eſſence* is ſuch that all his purpoſes and Counſels ſtand firm and fixed for ever, *Mal.* 3. 6. *I am the Lord, I change not.* James 1. 17. *With him is no variableneſs nor ſhadow of turning.* And therefore becauſe of this Eternal fixedneſs of God's purpoſe, it is ſaid, *That he cannot deny himſelf,* 2 Tim. 2. 13. *That he cannot lye,* Tit. 1. 2. and that it is *impoſſible that God ſhould lye,* Heb. 6. 18. becauſe theſe things imply inconſtancy and fickleneſs, which is always an effect of weakneſs; for whenſoever we alter our Counſels and Reſolutions, it is becauſe we ſee ſome inconvenience would follow upon them, which we did not before conſider, which to impute to God were the higheſt Blaſphemy.

Now theſe three things only excepted, all other things in the World fall within the compaſs of *God's Power.* He is able to do all things (as *Origen* ſpeaks excellently) the doing whereof would not deny him to be God, or to be Holy, or to be Wiſe.

And therefore he cannot bring to paſs contradictions, nor can he alter his Eternal Purpoſes, for this would derogate from his infinite Wiſdom. He cannot be the Author of ſin, for this would be a ſtain and blot upon his infinite Purity and Holineſs, and both would be impotency rather than Power: and were he weak enough to do thoſe things, he would not be God, for it is Eſſential to God, to be infinitely Wiſe, and infinitely Holy.

Let us now briefly ſhew how this conſideration of the *Power* of God, may be made uſe of as a prevalent Argument for the ſtrengthening of our Faith in Prayer, and the aſſuring of us that we ſhall obtain what we ask, for our *Saviour* hath taught us to ſubjoyn it to all our *Petitions* as a Reaſon why we ſhould ask, and as a motive why we ſhould ſpeed, *For thine is the Power.*

Now the great ſtrength of this lies here, in that it muſt needs be a mighty encouragement to our Faith, to reflect and

and conſider that whatſoever we ask, we ask it of a God that is able to give it us; he is not a weak impotent *Deity*, but a God who hath *all Power* in his hands, and therefore can effect whatſoever we deſire of him.

Behold what care God hath taken to ſtrengthen our Faith when we pray unto him. There are but two things that can make us doubt of ſpeeding in our Requeſts, the one is whether God will, the other is whether he can grant us what we ask: And that our Faith might not boggle at either of theſe, our Saviour hath as it were hedged in and incloſed all our Prayers with theſe two great fences for our Faith, God's willingneſs, and his Power to help: the *Preface* to this excellent Prayer, contains the one, and the *Concluſion* of this Prayer the other. He is our *Father*, and therefore if Earthly Parents whoſe Bowels of Mercy are but finite, are yet ſo tender over their Children, and ready to do their utmoſt to contribute what aſſiſtance they can towards them; much more will our *Heavenly Father*, whoſe Mercies and Compaſſions are infinite and boundleſs. But leſt our Faith ſhould yet ſtagger and ſuſpect the *Power* and *Ability* of God to relieve and help us, the *Concluſion* of this Prayer puts in a caution againſt all unbelieving ſcruples in this caſe; *Thine is the Power*. So that we have abundant ſecurity for our Faith in whatſoever we deſire of God, becauſe he hath declared himſelf both willing and able to ſupply our wants, and ſatisfie our deſires. Indeed the *Power* of God alone is not a ſufficient plea, for we have before ſeen, that God is able to effect infinitely more than he will, but then the *Power* of God is a ſtrong and forcible plea, when it is joyn'd with his Will: And when we are once aſſured by the Promiſes of his Word, that God is *willing* to beſtow upon us the Bleſſings that we ask; then to bend the force of this plea towards him, that he is likewiſe *able*, will moſt certainly prevail. And that Prayer that is directed in Faith, and winged with both theſe motives, ſhall never return into our Boſoms in vain and ineffectual.

Thus

Thus have I finiſhed the two firſt *Attributes* of God made uſe of by our Saviour in this *Prayer*, his *Sovereignty*, and his *Omnipotency*. It remains now that we ſpeak ſomething to the third *Attribute* of God, which our Lord here teacheth us to make uſe of in praying to him, and that is the *Glory* of God. *For thine is the Glory.*

But this is an *Attribute* ſo bright and dazling, ſo ſurrounded and fring'd about with Rays of inacceſſible light, that the *Holy Angels* themſelves cannot ſtedfaſtly behold it, but twinkle and glimmer; yea, vail their Faces at the full Beams of that *Object*, the Viſion of which is yet their Eternal Joy and Happineſs. And therefore whenſoever weak or vile Man can either ſpeak or conceive of the infinite Glory of the great God, will inſtead of exalting, debaſe it; and we ſhall but deſame while we attempt to celebrate it; ſo infinitely do the *Perfections* of the *Deity* ſurmount our moſt raiſed Affections, that our very Praiſes thereof, are but leſſening of it: And whatſoever we aſcribe unto God, is but detracting from him. Think with your ſelves a little, if two blind Men that never ſaw the *Sun*, were diſcourſing together about it, what ſtrange, uncouth and improper fancies would they form of its Light and Splendour? Surely ſuch, yea vaſtly more confuſed and diſproportion'd, are all our notions and conceptions of the *Glory* of God, which is a Light that is inviſible, obſcurity that is dazling, and whatſoever elſe is moſt inconceivable to humane capacities. For the *Scripture* ſometimes deſcribes God's dwelling-place to be *in that Light unto which no Mortal Eye can approach.* And ſometimes that his *Pavillion is dark Clouds* which no Eye can penetrate: And both to ſignifie how impoſſible a thing it is to ſearch out God, and to find out the Almighty to perfection.

Yet ſince he hath been graciouſly pleaſed to give us ſome refracted and allay'd *Rays* of himſelf, ſuch as we are able to bear, both in the Works of Creation and Providence, and like-

likewiſe in his Holy Word; let us with all humble modeſty take notice of thoſe diſcoveries which he hath made of his Glory, wherein we ſhall find enough, if not to ſatisfie our curioſity, yet to excite our veneration, and by ſeeing ſome glimpſes of his *back-parts* which he cauſes to paſs before us, our deſires will be made more earneſt after that Eſtate of conſummate Happineſs, where we ſhall for ever behold his Face, where we ſhall no longer ſee him *darkly through a glaſs*, but ſhall *ſee him as he is*, and *know him as we are known by him.*

Glory therefore according to the true and genuine import of the Word, ſignifies any Excellency or Perfection in a Subject that either is or deſerves to be accompanied with Fame and Renown. And hence we may well diſtinguiſh a Two-fold Glory in God, the one *Eſſential*, the other *Declarative.*

The *Eſſential* Glory of God is the Collection and Syſtem of thoſe Attributes which Eternally and immutably belong unto the Divine Nature.

The *Declarative Glory* of God is the manifeſtation of thoſe his Attributes, ſo that his Creatures may take notice of them with Praiſe and Veneration. Both are here intended by our *Saviour* when he teacheth us to aſcribe the *Glory unto God.*

God is *Eſſentially Glorious* in all thoſe Attributes which appertain unto his infinite Being, for each of them is infinitely perfect in its ſelf, and the complexion and concentring of them altogether, make up a Glory infinitely great and incomprehenſible. Thus his *Holineſs* is Glorious, *Exod.* 15. 11. *Glorious in Holineſs.* His *Power* is Glorious 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 9. *They ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power,* Col. 1. 11. *Strengthened with all Might according to his Glorious Power.* His *Majeſty* is Glorious, *Pſal.* 145. 5. *I will ſpeak of the Glorious Honour of his Majeſty.* His *King-*

dom

dom is Glorious, Pſal. 45. 11. *They ſhall ſpeak of the Glory of thy Kingdom.* His *Grace* and *Mercy* is Glorious, *Epheſ.* 1. 6. *To the Praiſe of the Glory of his Grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.* And from all theſe reſult the *Glory* of his great and terrible *Name*, which hath in it an exceſſive brightneſs and luſtre from the Conſtellation of ſo many *Glories* united in it. *Deut.* 28. 58. *That thou mayeſt fear this glorious and fearful Name, the Lord thy God.* Yea, ſo infinite is this *Eſſential Glory* of God, that it diffuſeth and ſheddeth abroad its Light and Glory upon thoſe things which have but Relation to him, therefore the *Church* is ſaid to be *Glorious*, becauſe made in ſome faint reſemblance like unto God, Pſal. 45. 13. *The King's Daughter is all Glorious within.* Epheſ. 5. 27. *That he might preſent it to himſelf a Glorious Church, not having ſpot or wrinkle.* The *Goſpel* is therefore Glorious, becauſe it is that Glaſs wherein we ſee the *Glory* of God by a reflected Light. And as the Beams of the *Sun* falling upon a *Glaſs*, make it ſhine with an exceeding brightneſs: So the *Glory* of *God* ſtriking upon the *Goſpel*, and from thence re-bounding off to us, hath ſtampt it with an excellent Glory and Luſtre. 1 *Tim.* 1. 11. *According to the Glorious Goſpel of the Bleſſed God.* His *Throne* is Glorious. *Jerem.* 17. 12. *A Glorious high Throne from the beginning is the place of our Sanctuary.* Yea, not only his Throne, but that which might ſeem more deſpicable, his very *Foot-ſtool* is Glorious. *Eſa.* 6. 13. *I will make the place of my Feet Glorious.* Now this *Eſſential Glory* of God is both *immutable* and *incomprehenſible.*

Firſt, The *Eſſential Glory of God is immutable*, the ſame for ever, no addition can be made unto it, nor no diminution from it; for before there were ever any Creatures extant, God was the ſame Glorious Being that now he is. Our Praiſes and Acknowledgements can no more contribute to this Glory, than the Eye that ſees the *Sun* can increaſe the Light of it: for God's *Attributes* that are his *Glory* are

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no adventitious accidental things, that may be assumed or laid aside at pleasure, but they are all as necessary as his Nature is: And therefore though he be said to *cloath himself with Light and Glory as with a Garment*, yet is it a Garment that cannot be put on or off: But whatsoever God is in any one moment of Eternity, the same he is from all Eternity unto all Eternity. *He is the Lord who changeth not, and with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning.*

Indeed there are some *Titles* in God's Style, which seem not to have been always appertaining to him, and in respect of his Eternal Being, may appear as new Stars in the Heavens; and argue some alteration and change in his Glory, as to be *Creator* the Lord and *Governor* of this World, which he was not from all Eternity, nor could be till the Creatures were formed.

But here we must carefully distinguish between the *Absolute* and *Relative Attributes* of God. His *Absolute Titles* and *Attributes*, are such as belong unto him simply, without depending upon any respect or reference to any thing without and besides himself, and so he is *Infinite, Eternal, Wise, Holy* and *Merciful* in himself, and was so for ever before there were any *Created Objects* unto which, or upon which he might manifest these his *Attributes*. But now the *Relative Titles* of God have a time wherein they began, and wherein they shall likewise cease; as to be a *Creator* and *Preserver* of the World as it now stands; wherein though there may be daily mutations, yet God is the same, immutable, because these are only extrinsecal denominations, and arise merely from that change that is made upon the Creature, not from any change that is made in God: for still his *Power* is the same, whether he exert it in Creating or no: His *Wisdom* is invariably the same before he manifested it in the Government of the World as since, and in all the mutations that he brings upon the World, he is still the same *immutable and unchangeable God.* Only as those who Sail, think the

Shore removes, when it is but the *Ship*: So are we ſubject to the ſame miſtakes, and are apt to think *God is changed*, when only *our ſelves are changed*; that he moves from not being a Creator to be a Creator, when in Truth we only move from not being Creatures to be Creatures. And therefore when we ſay God is now a *Creator* which once he was not, it implieth no more change in God, than it would in any *Object* which now is ſeen, which before was not ſeen: and this is only a different external denomination, that makes no real change in the thing. But it may be theſe *Speculations* are too abſtruſe, and therefore I ſhall not detain you longer in them.

Secondly, *As the Eſſential Glory of God is immutable, ſo is it alſo incomprehenſible*, for it is infinite and the entire perfection of the *Deity*. It is the very Face of God, and therefore, *Exod.* 33. 15. When *Moſes* deſired God to ſhew him his Glory, God *Anſwers* him in the 20 verſe, *Thou canſt not ſee my Face, for there can no Man ſee my Face and live.* And although the *Angels* in Heaven and the *Spirits* of *Juſt* Men made perfect, have brighter and more radient diſcoveries made unto them of the *Glory* of God, than any that we can bear, yet neither they nor any other Creature can poſſibly comprehend the full Latitude and utmoſt extent of that *Glory*, any more than it is poſſible for a finite thing to contain what is infinite. And hence it follows, that when the *Scripture* promiſeth us as one great part of our Reward, that we *ſhall ſee God as he is*, 1 John 3. 7. We muſt not underſtand it as if ever we could arrive to ſuch a capacity as to ſee and know God as he is in his infinite *Eſſence*, for God's *Eſſence* being altogether indiviſible, to know God eſſentially, were to know him comprehenſively; to know him as much as he is to be known in himſelf, that is to know him as much as he knows himſelf, which is impoſſible, for no finite Underſtanding can comprehend an infinite *Object*. And yet our ſight and knowledge of God ſhall ſo far ſurmount

mount thoſe dim and glimmering diſcoveries which here he makes of himſelf to us, that comparatively the *Apoſtle* might well call it, *a ſeeing him as he is, and a knowing him as we are known by him.*

And thus much for the *Eſſential Glory* of God, which is himſelf and his own Infinite and Eternal Excellencies and Perfections. But beſides this,

Secondly, There is another Glory of God, and that is his *Declarative Glory*, which is nothing elſe but that viſible Splendor and Luſtre that reflects from his *Eſſential Glory*, upon the notice and admiration of his Creatures. So that there is a very great difference between God's being Glorious and being Glorified. God is always equally Glorious in himſelf, ſo he was before the Foundations of the World were laid. Before ever there were any Creatures to Celebrate his Praiſe. But he is Glorified by his Creatures, declaring and ſetting forth the infinite Excellencies that are in his *Eſſence*. We cannot ſet any new *Gems* in his *Diadem* which did not ſhine there before; but when we obſerve and admire thoſe ſeveral *coruſcations* of his *Attributes* which appear in thoſe various methods that God takes to manifeſt them; then are we ſaid to give Glory unto God. His Holineſs is always the ſame, but when we endeavour to imitate it, then we Glorifie it. His Power is always the ſame, but we Glorifie it when we depend upon it. His Mercy and Goodneſs is always the ſame, but we are ſaid to Glorifie it, when we praiſe and extol it. And therefore God tells us, *Pſal* 50. 23. *Whoſo offereth Praiſe, Glorifieth me.* We can add nothing to God by all the Glory that we aſcribe unto him, but then we are ſaid to give him *Glory* when we admire and adore, and celebrate thoſe *Glories* that are in him. And ſo St. *John* 12. 28. Chriſt prays, *Father Glorifie thy Name*, that is, make thine *Eſſential Glory*, the Glory and Brightneſs of thine *Attributes* conſpicuous to the World; to which *Requeſt* there was an *Anſwer* returned

from Heaven, *I have both Glorified it, and will Glorifie it again*, that is (as I ſuppoſe the words may well be interpreted) I have already Glorified my *Mercy*, which is my *Name*, in thy *Incarnation* and *Miſſion*, and I will alſo Glorifie my *Juſtice* in thy *Paſſion* and *Crucifixion*: by the one declaring how Gracious I am in providing a Saviour for the ruin'd World; by the other how Juſt and Holy I am in exacting a full and compleat ſatisfaction for the Sins and Tranſgreſſions of the World.

Now we may both add unto and diminiſh from this *Declarative Glory* of God. We rob God of his *Glory* when we interpoſe between his *Attributes* and the Manifeſtation of them unto others. We hereby wrong and injure his Repute and Eſteem in the World, and although we cannot pluck off any of his *Attributes* from him, (*For if thou ſinneſt, what doſt thou againſt God?* Job 35. 6.) yet we obſtruct the ſhining of them upon others. As in an *Eclipſe* of the *Sun*, the *Moon* doth not darken the *Sun*, but only darkens us, and hinders the Light which ſtill is the ſame in it ſelf from breaking out upon the lower World. So wicked Men by their ſins, though they cannot deprive God of the *Brightneſs of his Glory*, yet they impede the *Emanations* and out-flowings of his Glory, and hinder others from admiring and adoring of it as they ought.

Now the ways whereby God uſeth to expreſs and declare his Glory, are various.

Firſt, He doth it by his works, *Pſal.* 19. 1. *The Heavens declare the Glory of God and the Firmament ſheweth his handy-work*. For they manifeſt to the World, the *Attributes* and *Perfections* of their great Creator, even his *Wiſdom*, *Power* and *Goodneſs*. Some of *God*'s *Works* are his *Footſteps*, and ſome are his *Images*. The *Image* of God is ſeen in rational and intellectual Creatures, and by conſidering the *Wiſdom*, *Underſtanding*, and *mental Faculties* that God hath endowed them with, we may come to apprehend

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ſome faint ſhadows and reſemblances of the infinite *Wiſdom* and *Knowledge* of the *Original Cauſe* of them; ſince whatſoever is in them muſt needs be in a far more Eminent degree in the Author and Maker of them. But all God's Works carry, *quædam veſtigia Dei*, ſome Prints and Footſteps of God ſtampt upon them, whereby although they do not all ſhew his likeneſs, yet they ſhew his *Power* and *Wiſdom* in framing them. *Rom.* 1. 20. *The inviſible things of God, from the Creation of the World are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and God-head.* But he eſpecially Glorifies himſelf in the Extraordinary Miraculous Works of his hands, whether in a way of Mercy, or in a way of Judgment. *Exod.* 15. 11. *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, Glorious in Holineſs, fearful in Praiſes, doing Wonders?* Pſal. 85. 9. *Surely his Salvation is nigh them that fear him, that Glory may dwell in our Land.* That is, God by his wonderful deliverances of his Church and People, eſtabliſheth his *Glory* to dwell among them.

Secondly, *God declares his exceeding and infinite Glory by his Word*; For therein he hath given us the moſt clear and lively repreſentations of himſelf. And thoſe *Attributes* which his *Works* could never have diſcovered to us, he hath manifeſted by his revealed Will. This is that *Table* on which he hath drawn his moſt reſembling *Image*, this is that Glaſs wherein, *We beholding the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame Image from Glory to Glory*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. and it conſiſts of two parts, the *Law* and the *Goſpel*, the one diſcovers to us the *Glory* of God's *Juſtice*, the other the *Glory* of his *Mercy*; and both of them are *Glories*. 2 Cor. 3. 9. *For if the Miniſtration of Condemnation*, which is the Law, *be Glory*; *much more doth the Miniſtration of Righteouſneſs*, which is the Goſpel, *exceed in Glory*.

Thirdly, *The moſt clear manifeſtation of the Glory of God was made in Chriſt, who was the brightneſs of his Glory, and*

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the expreſs Image of his Perſon, Heb. 1. 3. in him Heaven was brought down to Earth, the infinite comprehended, the inviſible made conſpicuous: And all the *Miracle* both of Grace and Glory reconciled to our very Senſes. In him all the *Attributes* of the *Divine Nature* are ſo interwoven with the infirmities of the *Humane*, that (if I may ſo ſpeak) God in him ſtudied to exhibit to us a perſon like our ſelves, to give us ſome advantage for our apprehenſions to conceive of his infinite Perfections. In him Omnipotence became weak, Eternity Mortal; Innocence it ſelf guilty, God, Man; the Creator, a Creature; the Maker of all, its own Workmanſhip; Life it ſelf in him underwent the ſentence of Death: And all theſe ſtrange and impoſſible Truths, as for other ends, ſo for this that we might have ſome clearer hints and diſcoveries of the infinite Glories of God, which in their full brightneſs would only dazle and confound us; and were diſcernable by us only thus tempered and obſcured. And therefore the *Apoſtle* calls him, *God manifeſted in the Fleſh*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. Certainly God in Fleſh muſt needs be rather veiled and hidden than manifeſted. But although to himſelf he was obſcured, yet to us he was manifeſted, becauſe if the Glory of the *Deity* had not been thus *clouded* and *allayed*, it had not been *manifeſted*. For that *Light* which when tempered makes us *ſee*, will ſtrike us *blind* when too Glorious. As we may ſafer direct our Eyes towards the *Sun* when it is under an *Eclipſe*, than when it ſhines with uncheck'd *Rays*. Hence St. *John* ſpeaking of Chriſt in the mean Eſtate of his Humiliation, ſaith of him, St. *John* 1. 9. *We beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.*

Thus now you have ſeen what the *Eſſential* and *Declarative Glories* of God are; let us now conſider why this Attribute ſhould ſo eminently be aſcribed unto God: *Thine is the Glory*. Now there may be three Reaſons given of it.

Firſt,

First, *Becauſe all that is Excellent and Glorious in the Creatures, is to be found in God; and that either formally or eminently.* Is *Grace* or *Holineſs*, *Wiſdom* or *Strength*, *Duration*, *Juſtice* or *Mercy*, any Excellency in thoſe Creatures to which they are Attributed? they are all in God Formally, and infinitely more Glorious, and with infinite more Perfections, than they are in the Creatures: For Created Beings have but their limitted and ſtinted proportions of theſe *Qualifications*, but God is *infinitely Holy*, *infinitely Wiſe*, *infinitely Juſt*, and *infinitely Merciful*: theſe things are in him without allays or mixtures from their contraries. He is *Holy* without any mixture of *Sin*. *Wiſe* without any mixture of *Folly*. *Juſt* without any mixture of *Iniquity*. *Merciful* without mixture of *Cruelty*. Yea, theſe are all in him without any bounds ſet them by his Nature and Capacity; for they are his Nature, and therefore as infinite and as unbounded as it.

Again, Thoſe Excellencies that are in the Creatures and cannot formally agree with the *Divine Eſſence*, yet they are all in him Eminently. Are any Creatures Excellent for the Beauty and Symmetry of their parts, for Light, for Motion, or ſuch like *Qualities*, that do not belong unto the *Divine Nature*? Yet all theſe are Eminently in God, for he is the Prime and Original Cauſe from whom they derive their Being and Perfection; ſo that all *Glory* is his, his incommunicatively from any other, communicatively from him.

Secondly, *All Glory in reſpect of God is but darkneſs and obſcurity.* And ſo it was both a True and Divine Conception of *Plato*, when he ſaid, *That Light was but a ſhadow of God:* for as *Shadows* are vaſtly dark when the *Light* that ſurrounds them appears. So God is infinitely brighter than *Light* it ſelf. Yea, the *Sun* that Created Fountain of *Light* is but a *black coal* compared with this Eternal Father of *Lights*. This is well expreſſed by *Job*, 25. 5. *Behold even*

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to the Moon and it ſhineth not, and the Stars are not pure in his ſight. As the *Light* of the *Sun* when it ariſeth, drowns and extinguiſheth all other *Lights* (for its brightneſs as it brings a *Day* to all the reſt of the World, ſo it brings a a *Night* to the *Stars*) So the infinite brightneſs of the Glory of *God*, over-caſts all other Glory whatſoever with *Night* and *Obſcurity*. Hence it is ſaid, *That God chargeth his Angels with Folly*, Job 4. 8. So that if thoſe Wiſe and Intellectual Creatures be compared with God, they are but fooliſh and ignorant; for the *Glory* of his infinite and unſearchable Underſtanding ſo far tranſcends their reach that they know nothing, in compariſon with him who knoweth all things. The two chiefeſt *Glories* of Men, are *Wiſdom* and *Strength*; *Wiſdom* to contrive, and *Power* to execute; theſe perfect him as he is a Man: But yet ſee how the *Apoſtle* undervalues both theſe, when compared with God. 1 *Cor.* 1. 25. *The fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than Men, and the weakneſs of God is ſtronger than Men.* And therefore becauſe *God's Glory* is infinitely ſurpaſſing all others, our Saviour aſcribes it to him peculiarly: *Thine is the Glory.*

Thirdly, *Becauſe all other Glories in the Creatures ſerve only to illuſtrate the Glory of the Great God.* Seeſt thou any *Excellency* and *Perfection* in any of the Creatures? God hath ſo endowed them with it, not that thou ſhouldeſt fix there, and make that thy *Idol*; but that thou mighteſt have a hint from thence how much more perfect he himſelf is; and take thy riſe from *viſible Excellencies*, to admire thoſe that are inviſible. Is there ſo much Beauty and Harmony in the Frame of Nature? Think then how much more Harmonious and Orderly are the Counſels and Deſigns of the Great God, who hath contrived and diſpoſed the whole courſe and circuit of ſecond Cauſes. Is there ſo much awe and dread in the preſence of an *Earthly Majeſty*, to daunt all that are not impudent and profligate Offenders? Think then how infinitely venerable is the *Face* of the *Great God*,

God, ſince it is only ſome *Ray* of his *Authority* and *Majeſty* ſhining in them, that makes them ſo dreadful. Is it ſuch a pleaſant thing to the *Eye* to behold the *Light*? raiſe then not thine *Eye* of *Senſe*, but thine *Eye* of *Faith* to conſider how infinitely Bright and Glorious that *Light* is, that is never Clouded; that *Light* which though it infinitely diffuſe it ſelf, yet reſides always in its Center: *For God is Light, and in him there is no darkneſs at all*, 1 John 1. 5.

Thus you ſee that God hath therefore made any Created Being Glorious and Excellent, that it might ſerve as a Monitor to put us in mind of his greater Glory; and the more Excellent any Perfections are in the Creature, the greater advantage have we from them to raiſe our Meditations unto God.

And having thus ſhewn you why Glory is in ſuch an eſpecial manner attributed unto God, *Thine is the Glory*, it remains now to conſider what force this Plea hath to confirm our Faith, that we ſhall obtain from God thoſe things which we pray for; and here let us ſee its influence upon every Petition.

Firſt, The Glory is God's, therefore his Name ſhall be Hallowed. For his *Declarative Power* conſiſts in the Hallowing of his Name, ſince to Hallow, is nothing elſe (as I ſhewed you in the Explication of that Petition) but to declare God to be Holy, and this is to give Glory unto God. Hence we have them both joyned together, *Levit.* 10. 3. *I will be Sanctified by them that come nigh unto me, and before all the People I will be Glorfied.* To Sanctifie, is to Glorifie God. And therefore what better Argument can we urge that God would provide for the Sanctifying of his Name, than this, that the Glory is his, and if his Name be prophaned in the World, his Glory needs muſt ſuffer. How can the World know that God is infinitely Glorious in all his Perfections and Attributes, unleſs he take care by his own

methods to have his Name Sanctified among his People in their Expreſſions and Actions, and to have it Sanctified upon the Wicked in their Plagues and Puniſhments? Therefore we may well pray in Faith, *Hallowed be thy Name, for thine is the Glory.*

Secondly, The Glory is God's; Therefore *His Kingdom ſhall come.* For where ſhould he be Honoured but in his own Kingdom? God is greatly diſhonoured and his Glory traduced in the reſt of the World: And therefore if he will have any Glory ſecured and maintained, he muſt take care of his Church to maintain and propagate it. *Pſal. 76. 1. In Judah is God known, his Name is great in Iſrael.* The Glory of a King falls together with his Kingdom, and it lays a blot upon his Honour if he ſhould ſuffer his Enemies to overthrow it, while he hath Power to defeat their Enterpriſes; ſince therefore the Glory is God's, we may be confident that he will provide for the ſecurity and wellfare of his own Kingdom, and will for his Honours ſake eſtabliſh it ſo ſure, that the Gates of Hell, all the Power and Policy of Men and Devils ſhall never be able to prevail upon it, to its extirpation.

Hence then whenſoever we ſee the rage of the profeſſed Enemies of the Name of Chriſt, incroaching upon the Borders of his Dominions, when the State of the Church Militant ſeems viſibly to impair, or when the Hypocriſie and Wickedneſs of thoſe who are the profeſſed Enemies of Chriſt ſeems to eat out the very Heart and Power of true Godlineſs, we may well pray in Faith, *Thy Kingdom come*; Lord raiſe, Lord enlarge, Lord eſtabliſh it, *For thine is the Glory*, and unleſs thou wilt confine thy Glory only to Heaven, and account the Praiſes and Eternal Hallelujahs of Saints and Angels a ſufficient adoration for thy Great Name; Lord, have regard to this thy poor decaying Kingdom, for only in it, and in Heaven is thy Glory Celebrated. And

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if thou leaveſt this thy Kingdom to be over-run by the Agents and Miniſters of the Devil, if Prophaneneſs and Idolatry gain ground in it, ſo as to thruſt thee out of the Throne, What were this but to give thy Glory to another, which thou haſt promiſed not to do?

Thirdly, The *Glory is God's*, therefore *his Will ſhall be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.* The greateſt Glory that God can receive from us is by our Obedience, *John* 15. 8. *Herein* (ſaith our Saviour) *is my Father Glorified, that ye bear much Fruit*, God's chieſeſt Glory is his Holineſs, and therefore he is Styled Glorious in Holineſs. And we have no better way to Glorifie the Holineſs of God, than by endeavouring to be Holy as he is Holy. For then do we declare it to be a thing which we value as moſt Excellent and Glorious when we ſtrive to imitate it, and would fain get as much of it as our frail Natures can receive. And therefore we may well pray in Faith, *Thy Will be done, for thine is the Glory*, becauſe the greateſt Glory we can give to God, is by *doing his Will.*

Fourthly, *The Glory is God's*, and therefore will he provide for us *our daily Bread*, and all things that are neceſſary for our good. And therefore when God was Miraculouſly to provide Bread for his People in the Wilderneſs, he tells them, *Exod.* 16. 7. *In the morning then ſhall ye ſee the Glory of the Lord.* And certainly it is not for the Glory of God that any of his ſhould want things fitting and neceſſary for them. Only let us leave it to him to Judge what is ſo. For although he ſhould reduce thee to a morſel of Bread, and a cup of cold Water, yet he gives thee all that is fit for thee, and ſhould he give thee more, it would not be a boon but a curſe.

Fifthly, *The Glory is God's.* Therefore he will forgive thy *Debts* and *Treſpaſſes.* The Wiſe Man hath told us, *Prov.* 19. 11. That *it is the Glory of a Man to paſs over a Tranſgreſſion*, and ſhall it not much more be the Glory of God, whoſe Mercies are infinitely more Glorious than our Charity can be? Yea, he tells us, *Prov.* 25. 2. That *it is the Glory of God to conceal a thing*, that is to hide and cover our ſins, ſo that they ſhall not be found againſt us. And expreſly, *Epheſ.* 1. 6, 7. That *we have redemption, even the forgiveneſs of ſins to the praiſe and glory of his Grace.* And I have ſhewed you in opening of the Petition, that it is a very high Honour and Superiority to forgive, it is the Prerogative-Royal of a King, and therefore we may well pray with Faith. *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes, for thine is the Glory.*

Sixthly, *The Glory is God's*, Therefore he will deliver us from the Aſſaults and Incurſions of our Enemies, he will deliver us from Temptations, or from the evil of Temptation. He will not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, but will with every Temptation make a way for us to eſcape, hereby to demonſtrate the Glory of his Wiſdom and Power, that it is above all the wiles and power of the Devil and our Spiritual Enemies. And therefore we may well pray, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil, for thine is the Glory*; becauſe it is the Honour of God to defend his Servants from the incurſions of his and their Enemies.

Thus we have treated on three of God's Attributes aſcribed to him in this *Doxology*: His *Dominion*, his *Power*, and his *Glory.* It remains now to conſider the Amplification of all theſe by that expreſſion, *For ever*, which is to be referred and accommodated to the foregoing Titles, *The Kingdom is thine for ever, The Power is thine for ever*, and *the Glory thine for ever.* Now this application of it denotes to us the

the Eternity of God's Attributes, and conſequently his Nature.

Indeed this Particle *For ever*, doth not always in *Scripture* ſignifie a ſtrict and proper Eternity, for it is often applied to things of various durations.

Firſt, Sometimes (moſt improperly) thoſe things which have both beginning and end, are ſaid to be for ever. So the *Moſaical* Pædagogy, and thoſe rites and obſervancies which were impoſed upon the *Jews* by the *Levitical* Law, are ſaid to be everlaſting, although they were not to continue any longer than between *Moſes* and *Chriſt*, which ſpace was not compleatly Fifteen Hundred Years. Thus the Prieſthood is ſaid to be eternal, *Numb.* 25. 13. where it is called, *The Covenant of an everlaſting Prieſthood.* So the ſprinkling of the Blood of the Paſſover is to be commanded to be obſerved for ever, *Exod.* 12. 24. So *Circumciſion* is called, *an everlaſting Covenant*, Gen. 17 13. And many more ſuch inſtances might be given.

Yea, things of a far ſhorter duration than theſe, ſuch as are only to continue during life, are yet ſaid to be Eternal. The ſervitude of him that refuſed freedom, was to be for ever, *Exod.* 21. 6. that is during his natural life. And ſo the *Pſalmiſt* often reſolves himſelf and exhorts others to Praiſe and Magnifie God *for ever*. And indeed it is very ordinary in *Scripture* that thoſe things are ſaid to be *for ever*, which were not to alter their State for ſome continuance of time, nor to be diſuſed till the date prefixed to them were expired.

Secondly, Some things which had no beginning but ſhall have an end, are yet ſaid to be *for ever*. And ſuch (as they reſpect their Objects) are the Decrees or Foreknowledge of God, which ſhall in their due time be fullfilled. Thus *Epheſ.* 3. 11. they are called, *The Eternal purpoſe of God*, and

and yet they ceaſe under the notions of Decrees and Preſcience, when that which was from all Eternity Decreed and Foreknown takes its accompliſhment.

Thirdly, Thoſe things which had a beginning, but never ſhall have an end, are ſaid to be *for ever*. And ſuch are the Angels, all of them Created in the beginning of time, but their future continuance is without bound or period. And the Saints after the Reſurrection are ſaid to be *made equal to the Angels*, becauſe they ſhall not die, *Luke* 20.36. And Chriſt is ſaid to be made *a little lower than the Angels*, in that he taſted of Death, *Heb.* 2. 9. The good Angels live in Eternal Beatitude, they *always behold the Face of God*, *Matth.* 18. 10. And the evil Angels live in Eternal torments and a never dying Death, *They are reſerved in everlaſting Chains, under darkneſs*, Jude verſe 6. And thus the Souls of Men are everlaſting. For being Spiritual ſubſtances, and free from all principles of decay and corruption, they ſhall for ever continue in that Eſtate and Condition for which their Actions in this life have prepared them. And not the Soul alone, but the Body alſo ſhall be eternally preſerved in its being; *This mortal muſt put on immortality*, 1 Cor. 15.53. And then *ſhall we for ever be with the Lord*, 1 Theſſ. 4. 17. And yet all theſe had once their beginning by the Creating Word of God, but are Eternal, *à parte poſt* and ſhall always retain thoſe natures and beings.

Fourthly, That is moſt ſtrictly and properly ſaid be Eternal and for ever, which neither hath beginning nor end, whoſe proſpect both ways is infinite and boundleſs. And thus God only is for ever, and it is an incommunicable Attribute of his Divine Eſſence to be ſo. But becauſe all the perfections and properties of God are God himſelf, therefore this everlaſtingneſs here in the *Doxology* aſcribed to his *Kingdom*, his *Power*, and his *Glory*, are ſaid to be

be *for ever.* Yet not only theſe, but whatſoever is in God is abſolutely Eternal. His *Righteouſneſs is an everlaſting Righteouſneſs*, Pſal. 119. 142. *His Truth endureth for ever*, Pſal. 117. 2. *His Mercy is for ever*, Pſal. 136. 1. His Mercy endureth for ever, which is there made the burden of that moſt excellent Song and the ſweet cloſe of every verſe in it, *His Love is for ever.* Jer. 31. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love.*

Now in treating of the Attributes of God, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew theſe three things.

Firſt, What the true and proper notion of Eternity is.
Secondly, That God is Eternal.
Thirdly, What encouragement our Faith may have from this Attribute of God's Eternity, that thoſe things which we pray unto him for, ſhall be granted unto us.

Firſt, Let us ſee what Eternity is. And here though it be altogether impoſſible, exactly to deſcribe what is boundleſs and infinite, yet to help our weak and ſhallow conceptions, we may take this notion of it. Eternity is a duration which hath neither beginning nor end, nor ſucceſſion of parts. Or according to the common deſcription of *Boethius*, *Eſt interminabilis vitæ tota ſimul & perfecta poſſeſſio.* It is the compleat poſſeſſion of an endleſs life all at once. So that it is diſtinguiſhed from all other durations whatſoever.

Firſt, In that other durations have had their beginnings; for all things were Created either in time, or with time, but Eternity was before all time, and ſhall be after it.

Secondly, In that all Temporal durations are ſucceſſive, meaſured by the motions of Heavenly Bodies, by years, days and hours; but Eternity is permanent, it is but one abiding inſtant, and hath no parts following one after another,

ther, and though it comprehends all time within its infinite Circle, yet it doth not move along with time. For as Rivers are contained within their banks, and flow along by them part after part, without any motion of the banks themſelves, ſo Time is contained within Eternity, and flows along in it without any motion or ſucceſſion of Eternity it ſelf.

This I confeſs is hard, if not altogether impoſſible to be formed into an Idea; yet conceiving Reaſon will infallibly demonſtrate that Being which neither hath beginning nor end, can have no ſucceſſion in its duration; for where-ever there is Succeſſion, there muſt needs be a Priority, and where-ever there is a Priority, there muſt needs be a beginning. And if Eternity did conſiſt and were made up of ſuch parts as are equal and commenſurate to our years and days, it muſt needs follow, that theſe parts themſelves muſt be infinite; for if they be but finite, we ſhall come to a beginning, which is not to be granted in Eternity. And if they be infinite, thenin Eternity there muſt be as many Millions of Years as of Minutes, and conſequently a Minute would be equal to a Million of Years; yea, the leaſt part of a Minute would be equal to it, which is groſly abſurd.

But I ſhall not detain you with theſe Philoſophical Speculations. Only when we ſay that God is from everlaſting to everlaſting, we ought not to conceive that there is any Succeſſion in his duration; that he grows older, or that he hath continued longer this day than he was yeſterday. For though when we ſpeak of God, we are forced to uſe ſuch expreſſions, and denote Succeſſion in his Being, as that he was from everlaſting, and that he ſhall be to everlaſting, yet to ſay that God was, or that he ſhall be, is only allowable by reaſon of the penury of our conceptions: But in ſtrict propriety theſe are derogatory to him; for God neither was nor ſhall be, but only is and enjoys his Eternal Eſſence immutably and unſucceſſively. And therefore when

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Moſes demanded his Name that he might inform the *Iſraelites* who that God was that would take pity of their Sufferings, he tells him, thou ſhalt ſay unto them, *I AM hath ſent me to you*, Exod. 3. 14. And this indeed is the beſt and fitteſt expreſſion of his Eternity and unchangableneſs.

Yea, and the *Scripture* hath given us one more high and lofty expreſſion of it, *Pſal.* 90. 4. *A thouſand years in thy ſight are but as yeſterday when it is paſt*, what is yeſterday to this day? but a mere nothing. So a thouſand years, yea all the thouſand years, and all the time that ever the Orbs of Heaven ſhall ſpin out to the World, is all to God but as yeſterday when it is paſt; he lives not by it, nor is his Being meaſured out by days or years, but it is a perpetual *Now*, a ſtanding *Moment*, an indiviſible and permanent inſtant without flux or viciſſitude. Indeed it is wholly inconſiſtent with Eternity and an infinite duration, that there ſhould be any thing paſt, or any thing to come in it. For what is already paſt, cannot be infinite, becauſe it is already ended. And what is to come cannot be Eternal, becauſe there was ſomething going before it. And from hence it appears, that a duration which is Eternal, muſt be without beginning, without end, and without any Succeſſion of parts.

Now Secondly, That God is thus Eternal, appears both from clear Evidence of *Scripture*, and invincible demonſtrations of Reaſon it ſelf.

First, The *Scripture* bears abundant witneſs to the Truth of this Attribute, *Pſal.* 102. 25, 26, 27. *The Heavens are the Works of thy hands, they ſhall periſh, but thou ſhalt endure; yea, all of them ſhall wax old as a Garment, but thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall have no end.* Pſal. 90. 2. *Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadſt formed the Earth and the World, even from everlaſting to everlaſting thou art God.* Iſa. 43. 10. *Before me was there no God formed, neither ſhall there be after me.* 1.

Tim. 1. 17. *Now to the King Eternal and Immortal the only Wiſe God be Honour and Glory.* But I cannot ſtand to cite all the Teſtimonies that might be alleadged.

Secondly, The Eternity of God may be demonſtrated by clear and irrefragable reaſon. And that I ſhall give you in theſe ſeveral gradations.

Firſt, It is abſolutely neceſſary that there be ſome firſt cauſe of all things that are made, which is not it ſelf made or produced by any. For the ſeries of Cauſes is not infinite, otherwiſe no effect could be produced, ſince what is infinite cannot be paſs'd through. And if all Beings that are, are cauſed by ſome pre-exiſtent Being, then there is not, nor ever was a Being, before which there was not another, and ſo this groſs abſurdity will follow, That before there was a Being, there was a Being, which is a contradiction. Therefore we muſt neceſſarily reſt in ſome firſt Cauſe, from which all things have their Origin, and is it ſelf cauſed by no other.

Secondly, This firſt Cauſe of all is God. For whatſoever is the firſt Cauſe of all things, muſt needs be Almighty in that it produceth them, and All-wiſe in that it Governs and Maintains them; and incomprehenſible; for that Being which hath no Cauſe, cannot be perfectly known, ſince a perfect and comprehenſive knowledge of things is derived only from the knowledge of the Cauſes of them. Now whatſoever is Almighty, All-wiſe, and Incomprehenſible, is that God whom we adore.

Thirdly, God being the firſt Cauſe of all things, and not produced himſelf by any other pre-exiſtent Being, it is impoſſible that there ſhould be any time wherein he was not. For that which once was not, either ſhall never be, or muſt be made. And therefore it being wholly inconſiſtent with the

the notion of a firſt Cauſe to be made or produced; it clearly follows, that we can never conceive a time wherein God was not.

Hence it appears that God is Eternal, *à parte ante*, or from everlaſting: And that he is alſo Eternal *à parte poſt*, or to everlaſting, appears,

Fourthly, Becauſe that which hath no beginning of its duration, can have no end of it. For the firſt Cauſe of all not depending upon any for the production of its Being, can depend upon none for the continuation of it, and therefore of neceſſity muſt exiſt to all Eternity.

And thus you ſee how much Reaſon alone can ſpeak for the Eternity of God. The demonſtrations which I have now given you are ſo clear and perſpicuous, that would thoſe Atheiſtical Spirits, who acknowledge no God but their Reaſon, duly ponder the force of them, they would even by their Deified Reaſon be inforced to acknowledge the Living and Eternal God, whom we adore. Poſſibly to ſome theſe things may ſeem difficult, to others they may ſeem needleſs, becauſe we all readily acknowledge the Eternity of God. But certainly if ever there were need to confirm the Doctrines and Articles of Faith by arguments drawn from the principles of Reaſon, it is now in theſe days of ours, wherein Atheiſm hath gotten ground and credit, and it is look'd upon as a ſign of a pregnant wit and mature and deep judgment daringly to diſpute againſt the Being and Attributes of God, and whatſoever is moſt Sacred and Venerable in Religion.

But certainly if there be Reaſon in any thing, there is Reaſon to believe the exiſtence of perfection of the Deity, not only from the Oracles of the *Scripture*, which are enough to ſatisfie a Chriſtian; but from the dictates alſo of natural Light, and the evidence that Reaſon brings in: which are ſo cogent and demonſtrative, that he that will notwithſtanding

be an Atheiſt, muſt alſo be irrational; and whoſoever will ſay in his heart, there is no God, or that God is not Eternal, or that God is not infinitely perfect, we may well ſay of him as the *Pſalmiſt* doth, that he is a fool, *The fool hath ſaid in his heart, there is no God*, Pſal. 14. 1.

And thus I have ſhewed unto you what Eternity is in its proper notion, and have evinced likewiſe that God is in the ſtricteſt ſence, Eternal.

And now before I come to the third thing propounded, let us here make ſome few practical Reflections upon this Eternity of God.

Firſt, Glorifie this inconceivable and Glorious Attribute, extol and venerate it with your higheſt thoughts and loweſt proſtrations, ſending your adoring thoughts as far into the Eternity of God as poſſible a humane and finite underſtanding can dart them. For though Eternity be ſuch a deep as can never be ſathomed, ſince it hath no bottom, yet it is ſweet and delightful to loſe our ſelves and be ſwallowed up in this Abyſs of Being. Thoſe proſpects are moſt pleaſant to the eye, that have nothing to bound them, no limits to reſtrain the ſight in its free range, ſo it is the moſt pleaſant proſpect to the mind, to contemplate ſuch an Object where there can be no boundaries ſet to our apprehenſions, and where we can ſee no farther, not for want of Object, but for want of Sight.

Secondly, Is God Eternal from everlaſting to everlaſting? let us leave then the care of all future events unto him, for he is the ſame unchangable God, and although we be but of yeſterday, and may not be to morrow, and when we die, then all our thoughts periſh with us, yet the everlaſting God can and will order all affairs for his Glory, and carry on our purpoſes if they be conformable unto his. We often-times are anxious and ſollicitous about what may happen after our deceaſe

ceaſe either to the World, or to thoſe we love beſt in it; but let us commit this care to God; he ever lives, and hath the ſame ever infinite Power and infinite Wiſdom to diſpoſe of all events as it ſhall pleaſe him. Let us therefore caſt theſe burdens upon him who ſhall ſtill ſurvive, as a Father for our Children, as an Husband to provide for our Widows, as a King and Governour to provide for our Countrey, as the Univerſal Lord and Monarch to provide for the affairs of the whole World according to the All-wiſe Maxims of his Eternal Counſels.

Thirdly, Is God Eternal? Why then ſhould we not give unto him the ſame Honour, Reſpect, and Service that his Saints have done in former Ages and Generations? He is ſtill the ſame God, his Holineſs and his Juſtice, and his Sovereignty ſtill the ſame. And if the conſideration of theſe his Attributes had ſuch a mighty influence upon the Saints of former times, to engage them to a ſtrict and holy life, why ſhould they not now have the like influence upon us? He is the Lord, he changeth not, and therefore as abſolutely as he required Obedience from them, ſo abſolutely now doth he require it from us. But the truth is, we live as if God were grown old, as if his Juſtice were now out of date, or his Power decrepit: We live as if there were decays in the *Deity*; yea, indeed as if there were no God in the World to take notice of, and puniſh our ſins. Certainly that God who once lived to denounce threatnings, ſtill lives to execute them: He is the ſame Holy, the ſame Powerful, the ſame Juſt God that ever he was: Why then ſhould not we give him the ſame Honour, and Reſpect, and Service? Why ſhould we not love and fear him as the Saints of old have done, ſince we have the ſame God whom they Worſhipped, and a God who requires from us the ſame Duties and Obſervances?

Let

Let us now proceed to the third and laſt thing propounded, which was to ſhew you what incouragement our Faith may have from this Attribute of God, Eternity, to expect the grant of thoſe good things, which we pray for. For our Saviour hath taught us to uſe this as a plea with God in our Prayers. *For thine is the Kingdom*, &c. *for ever.*

And indeed this Incouragement is great and manifold. For hence we may with confidence rely upon God for merciful ſupplies in all our wants, for deliverance in all our dangers, for ſupports under all our troubles, and for comfort under all our ſorrows, becauſe he is Eternal, and therefore the ſame God, who hath heretofore in all Ages of the World done great things for all thoſe who truſt in him. And therefore *the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory*, which were a forcible plea with God in former times, a plea to which he could deny nothing when urged in Faith, have ſtill the ſame efficacy and validity now: For theſe and all other of God's Attributes are his for ever. Therefore, O Chriſtian, now lay hold on God's ſtrength, and plead with him what he hath done for his Children in former Ages: How he hath forgiven the Penitent, revived the Contrite, reſtored Joy and Salvation to dejected and deſpondent Spirits; how he hath wrought for the Sanctification of his great Name; by what wonderful providences, and wiſe methods he hath eſtabliſhed and inlarged his Kingdom; how he hath ſtrengthened the weak hands and feeble knees, and made thoſe who were without Might, able by his Grace, to perform the hardeſt Duties in fulfilling his Will and Commandments; how he hath provided for all their neceſſities, rebuked the temptations of the wicked one, and kept them in the World from the evil of the World. And then urge: Lord, thou art ſtill the ſame God, Eternal in thy Eſſence, Immutable in thy Attributes;

tributes; thy Power, thy Wiſdom and thy Mercy are the ſame that ever they were, and therefore vouchſafe unto us the ſame Favour. This plea offers an holy violence to Heaven, a violence that is pleaſing and acceptable unto God, which he will not, he cannot reſiſt. If we endeavour to be of the ſame diſpoſitions and affections with the Saints of old, we may be ſure to obtain of God's hands the ſame Mercy and Salvation. See how *Aſaph* inſtructs the Church to make uſe of the Memorials of God's former loving kindneſſes, and the great and wonderful works that he had wrought for their Fathers, *Pſal.* 78. 4, 6, 7. *We will ſhew to the Generations to come, the Praiſes of the Lord and his ſtrength, and the wonderful works that he hath done, that one Generation may declare them to another, that they may ſet their hope in God.* And therefore the conſideration of the Eternity and unchangableneſs of God, is of vaſt and infinite comfort, and a mighty advantage for the ſtrengthening our Faith, in pleading with God for the ſame Mercies which he hath formerly beſtowed upon others, becauſe he is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever.

And thus I have finiſhed the *Doxology*, and therein conſidered the four Glorious Attributes aſcribed unto God in it; his Sovereignty, his Omnipotence, his Excellency, and his Eternity.

There remains but one thing more to be ſpoken of in this Prayer, and that is the Concluſion, and Ratification of all in that ſhort Particle, *Amen.*

Of this I ſhall ſpeak but very briefly, and ſo ſhut up this whole Subject.

This word *Amen*, is ſometimes prefixed before a Speech, and ſometimes affixed after it. When it is prefixed before,

it

it is aſſertory, and ſo we find it very often in the *Evangeliſts*; for whereſoever our Saviour uſeth the word *verily*, it is no other but *Amen. Verily, verily I ſay unto thee*; i. e. *Amen Amen, I ſay unto thee*; which is a vehement aſſertion of the Truth and neceſſity of what he ſpeaks. And our Saviour uſeth it to gain the more attention and belief to what he deſires. Thus *John* 3. 5. *Amen, Amen, I ſay unto thee, except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* So John 16. 23. *Amen, Amen, I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall ask of the Father, in my Name he will give it you.* And ſo in many other places in the *Evangeliſts*. How backward are we to believe, ſince our infidelity is ſuch that it conſtraineth the Son of God, who is Truth it ſelf, to uſe aſſeverations and proteſtations to win our aſſent unto him?

Secondly, As this Particle *Amen* uſed in the beginning of a Speech, is Aſſertory of the undoubted Truth of it, ſo when it is ſubjoined and uſed at the end of it, is Precatory, and ſignifies our earneſt deſire to have our Prayers heard, and our Petitions granted. *Pſal.* 41. 13. *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael from everlaſting to everlaſting, Amen, and Amen.* Pſal 72. 19. *Let the whole Earth be filled with his Glory, Amen, and Amen.* Pſal. 106. 48. *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, from everlaſting to everlaſting, and let all the People ſay Amen.* In the former ſence of the words as it is prefixed to a Speech, it ſignifies *ſo it is.* In this Latter, as it is added to a Petition or Requeſt, it ſignifies *ſo be it.*

Now this teacheth us to put up all our Petitions, Firſt, with underſtanding, duly weighing and conſidering what it is we ask of God. For when we uſe vain and inſignificant babling, how can we ſeal and cloſe them up with an hearty

Amen?

Amen? And this condemns the mockery of the *Papiſts*, who becauſe God underſtands what is uttered in a language to them unknown, think that they may lawfully pray to him in a Tongue which they themſelves underſtand not. But with what Zeal, with what affection can they cloſe up ſuch Prayers with an *Amen*? This is like ſetting a Seal to an Inſtrument which they know not what it contains: and is expreſly condemned by the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 14. 16. *How ſhall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, ſay Amen, at thy giving of Thanks, ſeeing he underſtands not what thou ſayeſt*?

Secondly, It teacheth us to preſent all our requeſts to the Throne of Grace, with fervent Zeal and Affection: *Amen* is a wing to our Prayers; it is the Bow that ſhoots them up to Heaven. And although every Petition as we utter them before God, ſhould be accompanied with an earneſt and hearty deſire to have them heard and granted; yet at the cloſe of them all, we are to redouble and repeat this our deſire in the word *Amen*. Wherein we do as it were briefly and ſuccinctly Pray over again all that we had prayed before; and in one word, beg of God, That he would give us all that we had before asked of him.

And therefore whether we Pray our ſelves, or joyn in Prayers with others, and make their Petitions ours, we ought to atteſt our underſtanding of, our aſſent unto, and our earneſt deſires after the Mercies that are begged by Sealing up the Prayers with an *Amen*. And certainly, it would be a very beſeeming thing if *Amens* were audible and ſounding, unleſs we are aſhamed to be thought to Pray when others Pray, and to make uſe of others expreſſions to preſent our Petitions. When we come to the publick Worſhip, we are not to look upon the Miniſter only as Praying for the People, but he is the Peoples Mouth unto God, and it

is or ought to be the Prayer of the whole Congregation which he preſents. They Pray with him, and by him, and every Petition that he makes to God, ought to be ratified with an *Amen* ſent from our very hearts: which if we ſincerely and affectionately perform, we have abundant aſſurance, that what is confirmed by ſo many ſuffrages on Earth, ſhall likewiſe be confirmed by our Father which is in Heaven. And how beautiful, how becoming, would this be when the whole Church ſhall thus conſpire together in their Requeſts? St. *Jerome* tells us, *It was the cuſtom in his days, to cloſe up every Prayer with ſuch an unanimous conſent, that their* Amens *rung and echoed in the Church, and ſounded like the fall of Waters, or the noiſe of Thunder.* This would be a Teſtimony of our hearty conſent to the things we Pray for. And if any two that ſhall agree upon Earth, touching any thing that they ſhall ask, they ſhall have it granted them, as our Saviour hath promiſed, *Matth.* 18. 19. then certainly, the joynt Prayers of a whole multitude of Chriſtians, muſt needs have a kind of Omnipotency in them, and be able to do any thing with God.

And thus I have with God's Aſſiſtance, given you a brief *Expoſition* of this moſt excellent Prayer of our *Saviour*. The Lord Sanctifie it unto you, and make it a means to help you to Pray with more underſtanding, with ſtronger Faith, and with greater Fervency.

The End of the Larger Expoſition.

A Catechiſtical EXPOSITION OF THE Lord's Prayer,

By way of

QUESTION and *ANSWER*.

By the Right Reverend Father in God, *EZEKIEL*, Lord Biſhop of *Derry*; by which he examined the Youth each Lord's-Day, during the whole Time he preached upon the Lord's Prayer.

Queſt. IS *the Lord's Prayer a Form of Prayer, or onely a Pattern for Prayer?*

Anſw. It is both: That it is to be uſed as a Form, appears, *Luke* 11. 2. When ye pray, ſay, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c. That it is a Pattern, *Matt.* 6. 9. After this Manner therefore, pray ye: *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c.

Q. *What are the Parts of this Prayer?*
A. They are Four.

1. The Preface or Introduction.
2. The Petitions and Requests.
3. The Doxology or Praise-giving.
4. The Conclusion and Ratification.

Q. *What is the Preface to this Prayer?*
A. Our Father which art in Heaven.
Q. *What observe you from it?*
A. That in the Beginning of our Prayers, we ought seriously to consider, and reverently to express the glorious Attributes of God; as an excellent Means to compose us into an Holy Fear of his Divine Majesty.
Q. *How many are the Petitions contained in this Prayer?*
A. Six; Whereof the three first respect God's Glory, and the three last our own Good.
Q. *What learn you from this Order and Method?*
A. That we ought first to seek God's Glory, before any Interests and Concerns of our own.
Q. *How are those Petitions divided, which immediately concern the Glory of God?*
A. In the first of them we pray that God may be glorified; in the other two, for the Means whereby he is glorified.
Q. *How divide you those Petitions which concern our own good?*
A. One relates to our Temporal, the other two to our Spiritual good.
Q. *What observe you from placing the Petition for our Temporal good, in the Midst of this Prayer?*
A. That we are onely to bait at the World in our Passage to Heaven, and onely refresh our selves with our daily Bread, in our Way and Journey thither.

Q. *What*

Q. *What are the Petitions which relate to our Spiritual good?*

A. They are two: One whereby we beg the Pardon of our Sins; the other whereby we beg Deliverance from them.

Q. *What aſcribe you to God in the Doxology?*

A. Four of his moſt glorious Attributes.

1. Firſt, His Sovereignty; *Thine is the Kingdom.*
2. Secondly, His Omnipotence; *And the Power.*
3. Thirdly, His Excellency; *And the Glory.*
4. Fourthly, The Eternity and Unchangeableneſs of all theſe; *They are Thine for ever.*

Q. *What ſignifies that Particle* Amen, *at the End of this Prayer?*

A. It ſignifies two Things.

So be it; Which notes our Deſire for the obtaining of what we ask.

So it ſhall be; Which notes our Aſſurance of being heard.

Q. *What is the Preface to the Lord's Prayer?*

A. Our Father which art in Heaven.

Q. *What doth this teach us?*

A. That in our Entrance into Prayer, we ſhould ſeriouſly conſider both the Mercy of God as he is our Father; and likewiſe his Majeſty as he is in Heaven: That the one may beget in us Filial Boldneſs, and the other awfull Reverence, and by the mixture of both, we may be kept from Deſpair and Preſumption.

Q. *In what Reſpects may God be ſtiled Father?*

A. In three eſpecially.

1. Firſt in reſpect of the Eternal Generation of his Son. And ſo this Title is proper onely to the firſt Perſon of the Trinity.

2. In respect of Creation and Providence, and so he is the Father of all: Mal. 2. 10. *Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?*

3. In respect of Regeneration and Adoption: And so he is the onely Father of the Faithfull; John 1. 12. 13. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believed on his Name:* Which were born, not of Blood, nor of the VVill of Flesh, nor of the VVill of Man, but of God: *Rom.* 8. 15, 16. *For ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to Fear: But ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry* Abba *Father. The Spirit it self beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God.*

Q. *In what Respects do we call God Father in this Prayer?*

A. In the two last: As he hath created us and doth preserve us. and as he hath regenerated and adopted us.

Q. *When ye stile God, the Father, do ye mean onely God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity?*

A. No. For God the first Person is eminently called, the Father, not in respect of us, but in respect of Christ. In respect of us the whole Trinity, both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is our Father which is in Heaven; Isaiah 9. 6. *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the Government shall be upon his Shoulder: and his Name shall be called, Wonderfull, Counsellour The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.* John 3. 5. *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee; Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God?*

Q. *What is implied in this Particle Our,* Our Father?

A. That God is the Father of all Men, He is the Father of the VVicked by Creation, and Providence; but especially of the Godly by Regeneration and Adoption.

Q. *Is*

Q. *Is it proper in our ſecret Prayers to ſay,* Our Father?

A. It is: For ſo we find: Dan. 9. 17. *Now therefore, O our God, hear the Prayer of thy Servant, and his Supplications, and cauſe thy Face to ſhine upon thy Sanctuary that is deſolate, for the Lord's Sake.*

Q. *What learn we by ſtiling God our Father?*

A. Firſt to eſteem one another as Brethren; ſinceall partake of the ſame common Nature; much more as we partake of the ſame eſpecial Grace: To intereſt one another in our Prayers, and thereby maintain the Communion of Saints.

Q. *But ſince God is every where preſent, why hath our Saviour taught us to direct our Prayers to our Father in Heaven?*

A. Firſt; becauſe Heaven is the moſt glorious Place of God's Reſidence; and therefore God is repreſented to us in Heaven, to affect us with his Glory and Majeſty.

Secondly; Becauſe God no where hears our Prayers with acceptation but onely in Heaven. For there onely are they repreſented by Chriſt's Interceſſion, which he makes in both Natures.

Q. *What learn ye from our being commanded to direct our Prayers to God in Heaven?*

A. That we ſhould ſo pray as to pierce Heaven, which cannot be done by the ſtrength and intention of our Voice, but of our Zeal and Affection.

Q. *Is the Voice neceſſary in Prayer?*

A. It is, onely upon three Accounts.

1. As that which God requires ſhould be imployed in his Service.

2. VVhen in ſecret it may be an help to raiſe our Affections, ſtill keeping it within the Bounds of Decency and Secrecy.

3. In our joyning with others it is an help likewiſe, to raiſe and quicken their Affections.

Q. *What*

Q. *What is the first Petition of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. Hallowed be thy Name.

Q. *What is here meant by the Name of God?*

A. First, God's Name is himself: Psal. 20. 1. *The Lord hear thee in the Day of Trouble, the Name of the God of* Jacob *defend thee*; and many other Places.

Secondly, The Name of God is any perfection ascribed unto him, whereby he hath made himself known unto us.

Q. *What are the Names of God?*

A. His Titles, and his Attributes.

Q. *What are his Titles?*

A. They are many; as *Jehovah*, which signifies Being, and giving being; *Creator*, denoting his Infinite Power; *Lord*, and *King*, denoting his Authority and Dominion; *Father*, signifying his Care and Goodness towards his Creatures; *Redeemer*, noting his Mercy and Grace, in delivering them from Temporal Evils, and especially from Eternal Death.

Q. *What are the Attributes of God?*

A. They are of two Sorts, either Incommunicable or Communicable.

Q. *Which are his incommunicable Attributes?*

A. Such as are so proper to the Divine Essence, that they cannot in any Measure or Resemblance be ascribed to the Creatures. Such are the Eternity, Immensity, Simplicity, and Immutability.

Q. *What are his communicable Attributes?*

A. They are such as may in some Analogy and Resemblance be found in the Creatures. As Holiness, Justice, Mercy, Truth, Wisdom and Power.

Q. *Since they are to be found in the Creatures, how are they then the proper Names of God?*

A. They are the proper Names of God, when they are applied to him free from all those Imperfections that attend them in the Creatures.

Q. *What*

Q. *What are theſe Imperfections?*
A. They are Three.

1. Firſt, That all the Perfections of the Creatures, are not Originally from themſelves, but derivatively from God.
2. Secondly, They are not infinite, but limited.
3. Thirdly, They are not unchangeable, but mutable.

Q. *How then do theſe become the Names of God?*
A. VVhen we aſcribe them unto God as Originally from himſelf, and infinitely, and unchangeably in himſelf.

Q. *What is it to hallow this Name of God?*
A. It ſignifies to make his Name Holy.

Q. *How can God or his Name be made Holy?*
A. Neither by Dedication to Holy Uſes, nor by Infuſion of Holy Habits; both which are frequently in Scripture called Hallowing or Sanctifying; but onely by Declaration of his Glory and Holineſs.

Q. *How do we hallow the Name of God by Declaration?*
A. VVhen in our moſt reverend Thoughts we obſerve and admire the Expreſſions of his Attributes, and indeavour to ſet them forth to others, both in VVords and Actions.

Q. *What pray you for in this Petition*, Hallowed be thy Name?
A. For three Things in the General.

1. Firſt, VVe beg ſuch Graces for our ſelves, as may inable us to ſanctifie the Name of God.

Q. *What are they eſpecially?*
A. Knowledge and Underſtanding of his Nature, VVill and VVorks; Thankfulneſs for every Mercy, Patience under every Affliction, Faith in his VVord and Promiſes:

For

For to believe God's VVord gives Glory to his Name; Rom. 4. 20. *He ſtaggered not at the Promiſe of God through Unbelief; but was ſtrong in Faith, giving Glory to God:* An Holy and Exemplary Life whereby we eſpecially glorified God, and induce others to do ſo too: *Matt.* 5. 16. *Let your Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee your good Works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven.* And laſtly, ſavoury and well ordered Speech, that we may not prophane the Name of God by Oaths, or Curſes, or vain uſing it; but ſpeak of him with all Holy Fear, and Reverence.

Q. *What elſe do we beg of God in this Petition?*

A. VVe beg that others alſo may receive Grace to inable them to ſanctifie his Name. And Thirdly, we beg that God would ſo over-rule all Things; that his Glory may be promoted by them.

Q. *What learn you from Chriſt's making this the firſt Petition of his Prayer?*

A. 1. Firſt, That the Glory of God is to be preferred by us, before all other Things whatſoever. John 12. 27, 28. *Now is my Soul troubled, and what ſhall I ſay: Father ſave me from this Hour: But for this Cauſe came I unto this Hour. Father, glorifie thy Name. Then came there a Voice from Heaven, ſaying, I have both glorified it, and will glorifie it again.*

2. Secondly, That in the Beginning of our Prayers, we ought to beg Aſſiſtance from God, to preſent them that his Name may be hallowed.

Q. *What is the ſecond Petition of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. Thy Kingdom come.

Q. *How manifold is the Kingdom of God?*

A. It is two fold, either Univerſal, or elſe his peculiar Kingdom.

Q. *What*

Q. *What is God's Univerſal Kingdom?*

A. The whole VVorld; both Heaven and Earth, and Hell it ſelf and all things in them: Pſal. 103. 19. *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.*

Q. *How doth God exerciſe his Dominion over this Kingdom?*

A. By the Power of his Providence, diſpoſing of all his Creatures and all their Actions, according to his VVill.

Q. *But ſince wicked Men are Rebels againſt God, how doth he maintain his Dominion over them?*

A. Three ways.

1. Firſt, In that they cannot ſin without his Permiſſion.

2. Secondly, In that he reſtrains them when he pleaſeth.

3. Thirdly, In that he juſtly puniſheth them for their Sins, ſometimes in this Life, always in the next.

Q. *What is God's peculiar Kingdom?*

A. His Kingdom of Grace, which is the Church, and that, either Militant here on Earth, or elſe Triumphant in Heaven.

Q. *How is the Church Militant to be conſidered?*

A. As it is either Viſible or Inviſible.

Q. *What is the Viſible Church of God here on Earth?*

A. It is a Company of People openly profeſſing the Truths that are neceſſary to Salvation, and celebrating the Ordinances appointed by Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. *What is the Univerſal Kingdom or Church of God?*

A. It is a Company of true Believers, who have Eternal and Inviſible Communion with God by his Spirit, and their Faith.

Q. *What obſerve you of both?*

A. Its Mixture and Imperfection; for in the Visible Church there is a great Mixture of Persons, the Bad with the Good; in the Invisible there is a great Mixture in Persons of Evil with Good, and Sin with Grace.

Q. *You have formerly told us that the Church of Christ in its Progress is the Church Militant, either Visible or Invisible; and that the Church of Christ in its Consummation, is the Church Triumphant. What is this Church Triumphant?*

A. The general Assembly of such glorious Angels as never fell; and such glorified Saints, as are raised from their Fall.

Q. *What is that Kingdom, which in this Petition we pray may come?*

A. Not the Universal Kingdom of God, which is the VVorld, for his Dominion therein is always the same; but onely the peculiar Kingdom which is his Church, and more especially that part of it, which is Militant on Earth.

Q. *In what Respects may God's Kingdom be said to come?*

A. In Three.

1. First, In respect of the Means of Grace and Salvation; which are the VVord, and Sacraments; for where these are dispersed, there God's Kingdom is erected.

2. Secondly, In respect of the Efficacy of this Means in the Conversion of Sinners; whereby they are brought into the Invisible Kingdom of Christ.

3. Thirdly, In respect of the Perfection of this Kingdom; for then God's Kingdom comes, when the Saint's Graves are increased; when their Souls are received into Heaven, and when both Souls and Bodies are consummated in Glory.

Q. *What do we pray for, when we say,* Thy Kingdom come?

A. 1. First,

A. 1. First, That God ſhould plant his Church where it is not: That all the Kingdoms of the Earth may become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Chriſt.

2. Secondly, That his Ordinances may be purely and powerfully adminiſtred; his word truly preached, which is the Law of his Kingdom, and his Sacraments duely diſpens'd, which are the Seals of it.

3. Thirdly, That God would ſend into his Church able and faithfull Miniſters, to be faithfull Stewards of the Myſteries of the Goſpel.

4. Fourthly, That the Miniſtery of the Word may be ſucceſsfull to the Converſion of thoſe that hear it.

5. Fifthly, That all the Churches of Chriſt may be kept from Errour, Schiſm, Superſtition and Idolatry, and that true Doctrine and due Diſcipline may be continued in them to the End of the World.

Q. *But may we not pray alſo for the Church Triumphant in Heaven?*

A. We may for the fulfilling of what is promiſed.

1. First, That the Number of them may be compleated.

2. Secondly, That their Perſons may be compleated. That the Bodies of thoſe Saints which now ſleep in the Duſt, may be raiſed, united to their Souls, and both made Eternally glorious in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Q. *Is not this praying for the Dead ſo, juſtly condemned of Popiſh Superſtition?*

A. No: for we pray not for another State, as the Papiſts do, when they pray for Souls to be delivered out of Purgatory, but we pray for the Perfection of the ſame State, in which the Souls of the Faithful already are; we

pray not for their Releaſe out of Torments, but for a joyfull Reſurrection, which both they and we expect; and whatſoever may be the Object of our Faith and Hope, may well be the Subject of our Prayers.

Q. *Which is the third Petition?*

A. Thy VVill be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

Q. *How is the Will of God diſtinguiſht?*

A. Into the Will of his Purpoſe, or the Will of his Precept; or into his ſecret and revealed Will.

Q. *What is the Will of God's Purpoſe?*

A. His Eternal Counſels and Decrees whereby he hath fore-ordained whatſoever comes to paſs.

Q. *What is the Will of God's Precept?*

A. His holy Laws contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament; wherein he hath revealed to us the Duties we ought to perform for the obtaining of Eternal Life.

Q. *How do theſe two Wills differ?*

A. 1. Firſt, In that there are many things which God wills by his VVill of Purpoſe, that he hath not willed by his VVill of Precept. For God commands nothing but what is Holy, yet he purpoſeth to permit many things that are Evil.

2. Secondly, In that we may effectually reſiſt his Will of Precept, ſo as to hinder the Accompliſhment of it, as we do whenſoever we ſin; but we cannot reſiſt the Will of God's Purpoſe, though many times to endeavour it, is our indiſpenſible Duty.

Q. *Ought not the Will of the Creature to be conformed to the Will of God in all things?*

A. Yes to the Will of his Precept; for that alone is the Rule of our Obedience: But in all things to conform to the Will of his Purpoſe may involve us in the greateſt Guilt.

Guilt. Acts 2. 23. *Being delivered by the determinate Counſel, and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain.*

Q. *Is there not then a manifeſt repugnance between God's Will of Purpoſe, and of Precept?*

A. No: for the Object of God's VVill of Purpoſe is Event; but of his VVill of Precept, Duty; and it is no contradiction for God to will, or permit that to be which he hath willed, or commanded us not to do.

Q. *Which of theſe do we pray may be done?*

A. VVe eſpecially and abſolutely pray, that the VVill of God's Precept, may be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.

Q. *What conſiderations may excite us to be earneſt in this Requeſt?*

A. Firſt, becauſe there is a great reluctancy in our corrupt Nature, againſt the holy VVill of God; therefore we ought earneſtly to pray, that he by his Grace would ſubdue it.

Secondly, becauſe the Glory of God is deeply concern'd in doing his Will, for by this we own his Sovereignty, and our Subjection to his Laws and Kingdom.

Thirdly, becauſe our own Intereſt is deeply concern'd in it; for it is onely by doing his Will we can inherit the Promiſes. Rev. 22. 14. *Bleſſed are they that do his Commandments.*

Q. *Ought we not abſolutely to pray, that God's Will of Purpoſe may be done?*

A. No: And that becauſe many things are brought to paſs by this Will, which we ought to pray againſt; as Temporal Evils, and the Permiſſion of Sin.

Q. *How then do the Saints in Scripture pray for the Accompliſhment of this Will of God; as in* 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. And Samuel

Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him: and he ſaid, It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good. 2 *Sam.* 15. 26. But if he thus ſay, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as ſeemeth good unto him. *Acts* 21. 14. And when he would not be perſwaded, we ceaſed, ſaying, The Will of the Lord be done. And our Saviour, *Luke* 22. 42. Saying, Father if thou be willing, remove this Cup from me; nevertheleſs, not my Will, but thine be done.

A. Theſe are not ſo much Prayers, as Declarations of their Submiſſion unto, and Patience under the Hand of God.

Q. *May we not pray at all, that God's Will of Purpoſe may be done?*

A. Yes, it is for Temporal, or Spiritual, or Eternal Bleſſings on our ſelves or others.

Q. *What force doth the Particle Thy carry in it, when we pray,* Thy will be done?

A. It may be taken either emphatically, or excluſively.

1. Firſt, It ſignifies that God's Will ought to be preferred above, and before all others. Acts 4. 19. *But Peter and John anſwered and ſaid unto them, whether it be right in the ſight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* Both becauſe it is moſt Soveraign, and becauſe it is moſt Holy and Perfect; ſo that we act moſt like Men, when we act moſt like Chriſtians.

2. Secondly, It ſignifies excluſively that God's Will, and not our own, may be done. For ours being carnal and corrupt, we pray for the ſubduing it to his.

Q. *What mean you by praying that God's Will be done in Earth?*

A. Firſt,

A. Firſt, I pray that it may be done by my ſelf, and all others living on the Earth. Pſal. 67. 2. *That thy way may be known upon Earth, thy ſaving Health among all Nations.*

Secondly, We pray that we may improve the few Days, of this Mortal Life, in the Service of God; for there is no Device nor Operation in the Grave.

Q. *Having given this Account of the Petition in the Matter of it, what is next obſervable?*

A. The Proportion of it, *As it is in Heaven.*

Q. *But is it not impoſſible to do the Will of God in Earth as it is done in Heaven, where the Holy Angels do perfectly perform it?*

A. It is as to the Equality of Perfection, but not as to the Similitude and Proportion of our Endeavours after it. For we are commanded to be holy as God is holy, and perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect: Matt. 5. 48. *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect:* Which Command we obey when we ſeriouſly endeavour it.

Q. *How then is the Will of God done in Heaven?*

A. Firſt, Thine Obedience is abſolutely perfect, both as to Parts and Degrees; that is to ſay, they obey all God's Will enjoined them, and that with all their might; and after this Perfection we ought to ſtrive, and in this Petition pray for a greater Meaſure of it.

Secondly, Their Obedience is chearfull, not extorted by Fears or Sufferings.

Thirdly, They do the Will of God with Zeal and Ardency. Pſal. 104. 4. *Who maketh his Angels ſpirits, his Miniſters a flaming Fire.*

Fourthly, They do it with Celerity and ready Diſpatch; and therefore the Angels are often in Scripture deſcribed to have Wings.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, The Will of God is done in Heaven, with all poſſible Proſtration and Reverence. Rev. 4. 10. *The four and twenty Elders fall down before him that ſat on the Throne, and worſhip him that liveth for ever and ever, and caſt their Crowns before the Throne, ſaying.*

Sixthly, The Will of God is done in Heaven with Conſtancy and Perſeverance. Rev. 7. 15. *Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and ſerve him Day and Night in his Temple; and he that ſitteth on the Throne ſhall dwell among them.* And thus we ought to pray and endeavour, that we may do the Will of God on Earth.

Q. *What learn you from this?*

A. That we ought not to ſatisfie our ſelves in comparing our Obedience with other Mens, as the boaſting Phariſee did; but to take the Examples for our Holineſs from Heaven, and to endeavour to imitate the Purity of Angels, and the God of Angels: For St. *Paul* himſelf when he preſcribes his Life as an Example for Chriſtians, doth it onely as he followed the Pattern of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. *Be ye followers of me, even as I alſo am of Chriſt.*

Q. *We have already conſidered the three firſt Petitions, which immediately related to God's Glory; it remains now to treat of thoſe which immediately concern our own Good; Which is the firſt of them?*

A. That, wherein we beg the good things of this preſent Life, in theſe words, *Give us this Day our daily Bread.*

Q. *What is here meant by Bread?*

A. All Temporal and Earthly Bleſſings that contribute, either to our being, or well being: For Bread being the moſt uſual and uſefull Support of Life, it is often in Scripture put for all kind of Proviſion neceſſary for natural Life. Gen. 3. 19. *In the Sweat of thy Face ſhalt thou eat Bread, till thou return into the Ground, for out of it waſt thou taken, for Duſt thou art, and unto Duſt ſhalt thou return.*

Q. *What*

Q. *What learn we hence?*

A. That it is not below a Spiritual Chriſtian to pray for Temporal Mercies, both becauſe they are needfull for us. Matt. 6. 32. (*For after all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek*) *for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe things:* And God hath promiſed to beſtow them. Phil. 4. 19. *But my God ſhall ſupply all your need according to his Riches in Glory, by Chriſt Jeſus.*

Q. *How ought we to pray for them?*

A. Onely conditionally; if it may conſiſt with God's good Pleaſure to beſtow them, otherwiſe we do not pray but invade; and if it may conſiſt with our good to receive them, otherwiſe we ask a Curſe inſtead of a Bleſſing.

Q. *What learn you from the word* Give?

A. That God is the Giver of every Temporal Mercy.

Q. *How is God ſaid to give us our daily Bread?*

A. Firſt, by producing it, and bringing it to us; for though the Chain of natural Cauſes be never ſo long, yet God holds the firſt Link of it in his own hand; Hoſea 2. 21, 22. *And it ſhall come to paſs in that Day, I will hear, ſaith the Lord, I will hear the Heavens, and they ſhall hear the Earth.* Verſ. 22. *And the Earth ſhall hear the Corn, and the Wine, and the Oil, and they ſhall hear* Jezreel.

Secondly, by bleſſing it to us, without which our daily Bread can never nouriſh us; Deut. 8. 3. *And he humbled thee, and ſuffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with Manna, (which thou knoweſt not, neither did thy Fathers know) that he might make thee know, that Man doth not live by Bread onely, but by every word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of the Lord, doth Man live.*

Q. *What mean you when you pray for daily Bread?*

A. By this we pray, That God would beſtow upon us daily thoſe Mercies which are ſufficient for the Day.

Q. *What learn you hence?*

A. That, as in praying for Bread, we pray for Conve-

niencies; not for Superfluities or Delicacies: So in our praying for daily Bread, we pray for preſent ſupplies; not Goods laid up for many Years. Which teacheth us to moderate our Cares and Deſires after Earthly Things, and to reſt ſatisfied in God's Providence and preſent Bleſſings.

Q. *May we not then carefully provide for the Time to come, and the Support of our Dependents?*

A. We may, and ought; but our Care muſt be onely prudent, and provident, not perplexing, and deſponding.

Q. *Why is that Expreſſion,* this Day, *added?*

A. To ſhew us, that every Day we ſtand in need of Supplies from God; and therefore ſhould daily pray to receive them.

Q. *Since we pray for daily Bread, why is it called our Bread?*

A. To note, that we ought to uſe lawfull Means to acquire what we pray for.

Q. *What pray you for in this Petition?*

A. 1. That God would give us the good Things of this Life, as the Acquiſitions of our lawfull Endeavours.

2. That he would bleſs the Increaſe of what is lawfully ours.

3. That he would beſtow upon us a ſpiritual Right, in whatſoever we injoy, through Jeſus the Heir of all Things.

4. We pray, that we may not deſire nor covet what is anothers.

5. We pray for Life it ſelf, that it may be prolonged, whilſt God hath any Service for us to do in this World.

6. For all the Means that may lawfully preſerve our Life and Health.

7. That he would ſtrengthen our Faith and Dependence on his Providence, who is the giver of all good.

8. That he would give us Contentment in that Portion of Earthly Bleſſings, which he allots us.

Q. *What is the fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. For-

A. Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.

Q. *What things are obſervable in this Petition?*

A. The Order, and the Matter of it.

Q. *What obſerve you from the Order of it?*

A. That after we have prayed for our daily Bread, we are taught to pray for Pardon of Sin. Which Method is moſt rational.

1. Becauſe the Guilt of Sin many times, with-holds from us thoſe Temporal Comforts which we ſtand in need of. Iſaiah 59. 2. *But your Iniquities have ſeparated between you and your God, and your Sins have hid his Face from you, that he will not hear.*

2. Becauſe without Pardon of Sin, our Temporal Injoyments, are but Snares and Curſes.

Q. *What obſerve you in the Matter of this Petition?*

A. Two things: The Petition it ſelf, *Forgive us our Debts*: And the Condition, or Proportion, or Plea, and Argument for obtaining this Forgiveneſs; *As we forgive our Debtors.*

Q. *What mean you here by* Debts?

A. The ſame which St. *Luke* 11. 4. Calls Sins. *And forgive us our Sins, for we alſo forgive every one that is indebted to us.*

Q. *How ſtand we indebted to God?*

A. We ſtand indebted to God, both as we are his Creatures; and as we are Offenders; on the former Account, we owe God the Debt of Obedience; on the latter, the Debt of ſuffering Puniſhment.

Q. *Which Debt do we pray God to forgive?*

A. The latter onely; for the former is irremiſſibly due to our great Creator.

Q. *How come we to be thus indebted unto God?*

A. By the Sentence of the Law, which condemneth every Tranſgreſſour of it, to undergo the Penalty it threatens, which Penalty is all manner of Woes and Curſes,

and Everlaſting Death. Gal. 3. 10. *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* Rom. 6. 23. *For the wages of Sin is Death.* Ezek. 18. 4. *The Soul that ſinneth, it ſhall die.*

Q. *Since the Suffering of theſe, is the Debt we owe to Divine Juſtice, why ſay you that Sin is that Debt?*

A. Becauſe Sin alone is the meritorious Cauſe of theſe, and we owe the Suffering of them onely as we are Sinners.

Q. *Are there no Sins venial in their own Nature, ſo as not to deſerve Eternal Damnation?*

A. No, not the leaſt; for the wages of every Sin is Death. All therefore are Mortal in their own Nature, and all are Venial through the Mercy of God in the Merits of Chriſt, excepting onely the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt.

Q. *Can we no way pay off theſe Debts, ſo as to ſatisfie the Juſtice of God?*

A. No: for neither can we do it by Obedience, nor yet by Sufferings. Not by the Duties of Obedience, for theſe are a Debt we owe to God's Holineſs and Soveraignty; and therefore cannot pay the Debts we owe to his Juſtice, and we cannot pay Debts by Debts: Not by ſuffering; for Sin being an infinite Evil, muſt be puniſh'd with an infinite Puniſhment; but we cannot ſuffer a Puniſhment infinite in Degrees, therefore it muſt be infinite in Duration; ſo that the Damned in Hell ſhall never be able to ſay, It's finiſh'd.

Q. *How then may we hope to be acquitted of our Numberleſs Debts?*

A. Onely through the free Mercy and Grace of God, pardoning them in Jeſus Chriſt; and therefore we pray, *Forgive us our Debts.*

Q. *What is Pardon, or Forgiveneſs of Sin?*

A. It

A. It is the removal of the Guilt of Sin.

Q. *What is the Guilt of Sin?*

A. The Guilt of Sin, is either the intrinſecal Deſert of Puniſhment; or elſe an Obnoxiouſneſs and Liableneſs to it, through God's Deſignation of the Sinner to undergo it.

Q. *Doth pardon of Sin remove both theſe Guilts?*

A. No: it removes not the former, for ſtill the Sins of thoſe who are pardoned, do in themſelves deſerve Eternal Death: But it removes the latter, *viz.* it takes away our Appointment unto Death. 2 Sam. 12. 13. *And David ſaid unto Nathan, I have ſinned againſt the Lord, and Nathan ſaid unto David, the Lord alſo hath put away thy Sin, thou ſhalt not die.*

Q. *How is it conſiſtent with the Juſtice of God, to pardon Offenders without Puniſhment?*

A. Though Believers are not perſonally appointed to Puniſhment; yet Myſtically they are; which Puniſhment they have already ſuffered in Chriſt their Surety, with whom they are made one by Faith.

Q. *To whom is this Prayer for Pardon of Sin directed?*

A. To God onely, whoſe Royal Prerogative is to forgive Sins, Iſa. 43. 25. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy Tranſgreſſions for mine own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins.* Mark 2. 7. *Who can forgive ſins, but God only?*

Q. *Have not the Miniſters of the Goſpel power to forgive ſins, according to that of St.* John 20. 23. *Whoſeſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted?*

A. They have a miniſterial and declarative Power, as Officers; not an authoritative and judicial Power, as Soveraigns: As the Prince onely pardons, the Herauld proclaims it: So God alone by the Prerogative of his Grace grants pardon, the Miniſter by his Office publiſheth it to all that repent and believe.

Q. *What*

Q. *What then must we judge of that absolute and plenary Power, which the Pope assumes of pardoning Sins?*

A. That it proves him to be Antichrist, in exalting himself above God; 2 *Thess.* 2. 4. *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.* For whosoever can forgive wrongs done against another, must be superiour to him, and have Authority to cause the Person offended to surcease the Prosecution, and sit down by the wrong done him.

Q. *If God onely can forgive Sins, how then are we bound to forgive those who trespass against us.*

A. We ought to forgive them so far forth as they have wronged us, but we cannot forgive the wrong they have done to God in wronging us, but must leave them to his Mercy, and their Repentance.

Q. *Since it is God's Prerogative and Glory to pardon sins, what Inferences may we collect from hence?*

A. First, That our pardon is free, and gratuitous, without respecting former Deserts, or expecting future Recompence.

Secondly, That our pardon is full and compleat, because it is an Act of God within himself; whereas what he works in us, is in this Life imperfect; Nothing of Guilt is left upon the Soul when God pardons it, though still there is something of Filth left in it when he sanctifies it; God does not pardon by halfs, nor leaves any Guilt to be expiated by Purgatory.

Thirdly, That upon our Faith and Repentance, our sins, whether greater or less, fewer or more, shall be forgiven; for this makes no difference in infinite Grace and Mercy.

Q. *But may not this incourage Men to continue in sin?*

A. Many do so abuse it, but their Damnation is sure and just. Deut. 29. 19, 20. *And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this Curse, that he blesseth himself in his heart,*

heart, ſaying, I ſhall have peace, though I walk in the Imagination of mine heart, to add Drunkenneſs to Thirſt. Ver. 20. *The Lord will not ſpare him.*

Q. *You have formerly obſerved, that it is God alone who can forgive ſins, and from thence inferred both the freeneſs and fulneſs of pardoning Grace. What obſerve you farther?*

A. 1. That though God's pardoning Grace be altogether freely beſtowed in reſpect of us, Iſaiah 43. 25. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy Tranſgreſſions for mine own ſake, and will not remember thy Sins.* Yet in reſpect of Chriſt's Purchaſe, it is not free, but coſt him the Price of his Blood, Heb. 9. 22. *And almoſt all things are by the Law purged with Blood, and without ſhedding of Blood is no remiſſion.* Matt. 26. 29. *But I ſay unto you, I will not drink hence-forth of this Fruit of the Vine, untill that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom.*

2. That the obtaining of Pardon is not free from the Performance of Conditions on our Part.

Q. *What are the Conditions upon which Pardon is granted?*

A. They are two; Faith and Repentance. Acts 10. 43. *That through his Name, whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive Remiſſion of Sins.* Acts 3. 19. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out.*

Q. *Is therefore a mere ſorrow that we have ſinned, a ſufficient qualification for obtaining Pardon?*

A. No: for ſo *Judas* is ſaid to repent. Matt. 27. 3. *Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he ſaw that he was condemned, repented himſelf, and brought again the thirty pieces of ſilver to the chief Prieſts and Elders.* But as true Repentance includes in it a Sorrow of Heart, ſo Reformation of Life, and Manners is always joined with a lively Faith.

Q. *Is pardon of ſin an Act onely of God's Mercy?*

A. It is likewiſe an Act of God's Juſtice to pardon the Sins of thoſe, who perform the Conditions of the Covenant of Grace.

Q. *How*

Q. *How prove you this?*

A. Both by expreſs Scripture: 1 Epiſtle of John 1. 9. *If we confeſs our Sins, he is faithfull and juſt to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs.* And likewiſe by Scripture-Reaſon; becauſe Believers being made myſtically one with Chriſt; therefore their Sins being already puniſh'd in him their Surety, and their Debts paid by him, cannot be again juſtly puniſh'd in their own Perſons, nor demanded from them

Q. *Is pardon of ſin our intire Juſtification?*

A. No: but it is one principal part of it. For Juſtification conſiſts both in Remiſſion of Sins, and Acceptation of our Perſons; the former depends upon Chriſt's Paſſive, the other upon his Active Obedience; his Satisfaction applied by Faith, makes us accounted guiltleſs of Death, and his Obedience worthy of Life; both which compleat our Juſtification, Epheſ. 1. 6, 7. *To the Praiſe of the Glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.* Ver. 7. *In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveneſs of Sins according to the Riches of his Grace.*

Q. *We have thus conſidered the Petition,* Forgive us our Debts, *what remains further conſiderable?*

A. The Condition upon which we ask it, or the Plea we urge for obtaining it; *As we forgive our Debtors.*

Q. *Who are meant here by* Debtors?

A. Other Men.

Q. *How are Men Debtors one to another?*

A. Either, 1. By owing them a Debt of Duty, and thus all Men are mutually Debtors to one another: Superiours to Inferiours, and Inferiours to Superiours, and Equals owe one another Love, Reſpect, and Kindneſs.

2. By owing them a Debt of Satisfaction for Injuries, and Wrongs done to others.

Q. *Which of theſe Debts is here meant?*

A. The

A. The latter onely, for we are bound to forgive thoſe who owe us Satisfaction and Reparation.

Q. *What learn you from hence, that thoſe who have wronged others, are called their* Debtors?

A. That they who in any kind wrong others, are obliged to make them ſatisfaction: If in their good Names, by acknowledging the Offence and ſtopping ſlanderous Reports: If in their Goods and Eſtates, by a full Reſtitution.

Q. *Is Reſtitution neceſſary to the obtaining of Pardon?*

A. It is: For unjuſt Detainure is as Evil, as unjuſt Seiſure, and it is a continued Theft. And our Repentance can never be true, while we continue in the Sin we ſeem to repent of; and without true Repentance, there can be no Pardon or Salvation.

Q. *But what if thoſe we have wronged, be ſince dead?*

A. We ought to make Reſtitution to thoſe, to whom it's to be ſuppoſed, what we have detained would have deſcended.

Q. *If none ſuch can be found, what muſt we then do?*

A. Then God's Right takes place, as the Univerſal Lord of all, and we are obliged to reſtore it to him, that is, to his Servants; and to his Family, and in the Works of Piety and Charity.

Q. *We have already conſidered the Debtor's Duty, which is to make Satisfaction and Reſtitution; what is the Duty of the Creditor or Perſon wronged?*

A. To forgive his Debtors. For we pray that God would forgive us, as we forgive them.

Q. *Wherein doth this Forgiveneſs conſiſt?*

A. In two Things.

1. Firſt, In abſtaining from the outward Acts of Revenge upon them.

2. Secondly, In the inward Frame and Temper of our

Hearts towards them, bearing them no Grudge nor Ill-will; but being as much in Charity with them, as though they had never offended us.

Q. *Muſt we then ſit quiet under every petulant Wrong that is done us, and ſo tempt others to the Sport of abuſing us?*

A. Private Revenge is in no Caſe whatſoever to be allowed. Rom. 12. 19. *Dearly beloved, avenge not your ſelves, but rather give place unto Wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, ſaith the Lord.* Revenge onely belongs to God, and the Magiſtrate to whom he hath delegated it. Rom. 13. 4. *For he is the Miniſter of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil.*

Q. *But if the Wrong done us tend to the Loſs of our neceſſary Subſiſtence, or our Life; may we not reſiſt it, and require ſatisfaction for it?*

A. We may: But it muſt be onely in a publick and legal Way; and even then we muſt harbour no Malice againſt them, but be ready to perform all the Offices of Charity, and Kindneſs within our Power.

Q. *May we not proſecute thoſe who have wronged us, unleſs the Injury be intolerable?*

A. We may when we cannot paſs by the Wrongs without wronging others: But where the Injuries are ſupportable, and we may forgive them without injuring of others, the Law of Chriſtianity commands us ſo to do. Matt. 5. 39. *But I ſay unto you, that ye reſiſt not Evil, but whoſoever ſhall ſmite thee on thy Right Cheek, turn to him the other alſo.* Where the Scope of our Saviour is, that we ſhould rather be willing to ſuffer a ſecond Injury, than to revenge the firſt in Matters tolerable.

Q. *But ſince this is a Duty ſo contrary to the revengefull Humour of Fleſh and Blood, what Arguments can you produce to perſwade the Practice of it?*

A. 1. Firſt,

A. 1. Firſt, That it is far more honourable to forgive a Wrong, than to revenge it.

Q. *How does that appear?*

A. 1. Firſt, Becauſe by pardoning Wrongs we act like God, and imitate him in that Attribute, wherein he chiefly glories. Exod. 34. 6. *The Lord, the Lord God, mercifull and gracious, long ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs and Truth.*

2. Secondly, Becauſe to pardon is always the Act of a Superiour, and a Chriſtian expreſſeth the Royalty of his Calling, by iſſuing out of Pardons.

Q. *What is the ſecond Motive?*

A. Conſider how many Offences God hath forgiven us, though the Diſtance between him and us, is infinitely greater, than onely can be between fellow Creatures; and though our Offences againſt him are infinitely more, and greater, than which we are to forgive to others. Ours againſt him are but a few Pence.

Q. *Which is the third Motive to enforce this Duty?*

A. The Conſideration of that binding Particle, *As:* Forgive us as we forgive others.

Q. *Wherein lies the force of this?*

A. By this we ſeal the Guilt of our Sins upon our own Souls, unleſs we be ready and willing to forgive others. And ſo we turn our Prayers not onely into Sin, but into a direfull Tremendous Curſe.

Q. *Which is the ſixth and laſt Petition of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.

Q. *What learn you from the Method of this Petition?*

A. In that it immediately follows the Petition, wherein we prayed for Pardon of Sin; I learn that it ſhould be our Care, not onely to ſeek for the Pardon of paſt Sins, but the Prevention of Future.

Q. *How is this Petition divided?*

A. Into two Branches, the one Negative, *Lead us not into Temptation*; the other Positive, but *deliver us from Evil.*

Q. *What signifies the Word* Temptation?

A. It signifies proving or trying. Which sometimes is done onely by way of Search and Exploration; and sometimes is joined with Suasion and Inducement; so that Temptations are either merely probatory, or else they are likewise suasory.

Q. *How many Sorts of Temptations are there?*

A. Five in the general.

1. Whereby one Man tempts another.
2. Whereby a Man tempts himself.
3. Whereby we tempt God.
4. Whereby God tempts us.
5. Whereby the Devil tempts us.

Q. *How is one Man said to tempt another?*

A. When either he perswades him to what is Evil. Prov. 1. 10. *My Son, if Sinners intice thee consent thou not.* Or to do that which may bring him into danger, Luke 20. 23. *Why tempt ye me?*

Q. *How is Man said to tempt himself?*

A. Two ways.

1. First, When he unnecessarily rusheth into Danger, and ventures upon the next Occasions of Sinning.

2. Secondly, When he is drawn away by his own Lust, and inticed. James 1. 14. *But every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own Lust, and inticed.*

Q. *How are we said to tempt God?*

A. Two ways.

1. First,

1. First, When we by our Sins provoke him to take Vengeance upon us. Pſal. 95.8. *Harden not your Hearts, as in the Provocation: and as in the Day of Temptation in the Wilderneſs.*

2. Secondly, When we preſumptuouſly try the Providence of God, having no Warrant nor Neceſſity to caſt our ſelves upon the extraordinary Effects of it. Mat. 4. 6, 7. *And ſaith unto him, if thou be the Son of God, caſt thy ſelf down.* Verſ. 7. *Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

Q. *How is God ſaid to tempt us?*

A. When in the Method of his holy Providence, he brings us into ſuch Circumſtances, as will diſcover either our Graces, or Corruptions. Gen. 22. 1, 2. *And it came to paſs after theſe things, that God did tempt Abraham, and ſaid unto him,* Verſ. 2. *Take now thy Son, and offer him for a burnt-offering, upon one of the Mountains which I will tell thee of.* 2 Chr. 32.31. *God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.*

Q. *How doth the Devil tempt us?*

A. Alway by Suaſion, inducing us by his Art and Subtilty, to the Commiſſion of Evil.

Q. *What Temptations do we eſpecially pray againſt in this Petition?*

A. Three Sorts.

1. First, Such as proceed from our own Luſts and Corruption.

2. Secondly, Such as proceed from other Mens inticing us to Evil, or inſnaring us to Danger.

3. Thirdly, Such as proceed from the great Tempter, the Devil.

Q. *What*

Q. *What learn we hence?*

A. That it is a Christian's Duty, not onely to keep himself from Sin, but also from Temptations to Sin.

Q. *What Reasons confirm this?*

A. First, Because it is designed of a rotten and corrupt Heart, to be content to lie under a Temptation, though it consents not to the Sin. That Soul is not chast to God, that is well-pleased with Sollicitations to violate its Duty.

Secondly, Because while a Temptation dwells upon our Hearts, we are in imminent Danger of committing the Sin to which we are tempted.

Thirdly, Because most Temptations, are not onely Temptations, but Sins too, as all evil Thoughts and Desires. And as long as these abide in us with any Complacency and Delight; so long are we in the actual Commission of Sin.

Q. *How is God said to lead Men into Temptation?*

A. Three ways.

1. First, When he providentially presents outward Objects and Occasions, which do sollicite and draw forth our inward Corruptions.

2. Secondly, When he permits Satan, or wicked Men, his Instruments to tempt us. And in these two Senses there is no Temptation whatsoever that befalls us, but God leads us into it.

3. Thirdly, When he withdraws the Influences of his Grace, and Spirit from us, without which Derelict̃ion no Temptation could prevail over us. 2 Chr. 32. 31. *God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his Heart.*

Q. *What therefore do we pray for, when we pray,* Lead us not into Temptation?

A. We pray for three Things.

1. First,

1. First, That God by his Providence would ſo order and diſpoſe all the Occurrences of our Lives, as not to lay before us thoſe Objects, nor offer us thoſe Occaſions which might excite or call forth our inbred Corruptions.

2. Secondly, That he would not permit the Devil to aſſault us, nor any of his Inſtruments.

3. Thirdly, That he would continue the Influences of his Grace unto us, to enable us to ſtand when we are tempted.

Q. *For what ends doth God thus lead Men into Temptation?*
A. For many wiſe and holy Ends: eſpecially Four.

1. First, To exerciſe and breath forth our Graces, to teach us the Wars of the Lord, to adminiſter Matter for our Victory, and Occaſion for our Crown and Triumph.

2. Secondly, To engage us to depend upon his Help and Aſſiſtance, and earneſtly to implore Divine Succours and Supplies.

3. Thirdly, To glorifie his Juſtice and his Mercy; his Juſtice in giving up wicked Men to the Rages of Temptations, to be hurried by them from Sin to Sin, puniſhing one Iniquity with another, till at laſt he puniſheth all in Hell. And his Mercy in ſupporting his Children under them, and delivering them out of all their Temptations, making his Strength perfect in their Weakneſs. 2 Cor. 12. 9. *And he ſaid unto me, my Grace is ſufficient for thee; for my Strength is made perfect in Weakneſs.*

4. Fourthly, That by our Victory over Temptations, he may confound the Malice of the Devil, and commend the Excellency of his own Ways and Service. Job 2. 3. *And the Lord ſaid unto Satan, haſt thou conſidered my Servant Job, that there is none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright Man, one that feareth God, and eſcheweth Evil?*

Q. *Which*

Q. *Which is the poſitive part of this Petition?*

A. But deliver us from Evil.

Q. *What obſerve you from the Order and Connexion of this Branch of the Petition with the former?*

A. I obſerve, that the beſt Security againſt Sin, is to be ſecured againſt Temptations to Sin.

Q. *Are not ſtrong Temptations to Sin, an Excuſe for ſinning?*

A. No: for the Devil can onely perſuade, he cannot conſtrain; for if he could compell, he would likewiſe Juſtifie; ſince there is no Sin, where there is no Liberty. All our Sins are of our own free Choice, and ſo by Conſequence is the Eternal Miſery thy expoſe unto. Hoſ. 13. 9. *O Iſrael thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf, but in me is thine help.* John 5. 40. *And ye will not come to me, that ye might have Life.* Matt. 23. 37. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the Prophets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as the Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not.*

Q. *Wherein conſiſts the great Danger of being tempted?*

A. In the Sympathy and Suitableneſs that is between Temptations, and our corrupt Natures, whereby they are apt to excite our Affections, and our Affections will ſway our Actions.

Q. *What mean you by the word Evil, when you pray,* Deliver us from Evil?

A. Firſt, Satan whoſe Stile it is to be the Evil, or the Wicked One. Matt. 13. 19. *When any one heareth the word of the Kingdom, and underſtandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was ſown in his Heart.* John 2. 13, 14. *I write unto you, Fathers, becauſe ye have known him, that is from the Beginning. I writ unto you young Men, becauſe you have overcome the wicked one.* Verſ. 14. *I have written unto you, Fathers, becauſe you have known*

known him that is from the beginning; I have written unto you young Men, becauſe ye are ſtrong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

Secondly, All other Evils, whether they be of Sin, or for Sin; whether Tranſgreſſions or Puniſhments. But eſpecially Sin, which is the greateſt of all Evils.

Q. *Why call you Sin the greateſt of all Evils?*

A. Becauſe it is ſo both in its Nature and Conſequents.

1. Firſt, In its Nature, it is wholly defect and irregularity, and that onely thing which he always hates, and never made.

2. Secondly, Becauſe all other Evils are but the Effects and Conſequents of Sin; ſince the Devil could not hurt us but by Sin, and no other Evils befal us but for Sin.

Q. *What collect you hence?*

A. That in praying to be delivered from Sin, we pray to be delivered from all Evils whatſoever.

Q. *What obſerve you from our Saviours teaching us to direct our Prayers to our Father in Heaven, that he would* Deliver us from Evil?

A. I learn hence, that it is onely the Almighty Power of God, that can keep us from Sin.

Q. *Whence doth that appear?*

A. Firſt, From the Conſideration of the Almighty Advantages, that our great Enemy the Devil hath againſt us.

Secondly, From the Conſideration of the Diſadvantages we lie under, to oppoſe his Temptations.

Q. *What are his Advantages, and our Diſadvantages?*

A. He is a Spirit, we are but Fleſh; he is wiſe and ſubtile, we fooliſh and ignorant; he long experienced, we raw and unpractiſed; he is diligent and watchfull, we careleſs and negligent: He lays a cloſe Siege to us without, and we betray our ſelves within.

Q. *What ways doth God take to keep Men from Sin?*

A. In the General three.

1. First, He doth it by restraining Providence.
2. Secondly, By common and restraining Grace.
3. Thirdly, By renewing and sanctifying Grace.

Q. *What are the Methods of God's Providence, whereby he delivers Men from the Evil of Sin?*

A. They are manifold and various; but Five are most especially remarkable.

1. First, Sometimes Providence cuts short their Power, whereby they should be inabled to Sin; Thus God withered *Jereboam*'s hand, which he stretch'd forth against the Prophet.

2. Secondly, Sometimes God cuts off their wicked Instruments either for Counsel, as he did *Achitophel* from *Absolom*; or else for Execution, as he did the Host of *Sennacherib*.

3. Thirdly, Sometimes by raising up another opposite Power, to withstand the Sinner. Thus the Rulers would have put Christ to Death, but durst not for fear of the People.

4. Fourthly, By casting in seasonable Diversions. Thus the passing by of Merchants, altered the Patriarchs Resolution from killing *Joseph*, to sell him.

5. Fifthly, Sometimes God removes the Object against which they intended to sin. Thus he delivered *David* from *Saul*, and *Peter* from *Herod*.

Q. *We have seen how God preserves Men from Sin, by his restraining Providence, shew now how he doth it by his restraining Grace?*

A. By restraining Grace God deals with the very Heart of a Sinner; and although he doth not change the habitual, yet he changeth the actual Inclination of it, and takes away the Desire of committing those Sins, which are unmortified and reigning.

Q. *To whom doth God vouchsafe this Grace?*

A. To many unregenerate Persons. As he did to *Esau* and *Abimelech*.

Q. *To*

Q. *To what End doth he vouchſafe it?*

A. That their Lives may be more plauſible, their Gifts more ſerviceable, and their Condemnation at laſt the more tolerable.

Q. *How doth God keep Men from Sin, by his ſpecial Grace?*

A. By exciting the inward Principle and Habit of Grace implanted in his Children, to the actual Uſe and Exerciſe of it?

Q. *Is not inherent Grace alone ſufficient to keep the Godly from ſinning?*

A. It is not without the continual Influence of God's quickning Grace; 2 Cor. 12. 7. *There was given to me a Thorn in the Fleſh, the Meſſenger of Satan to buffet me, leſt I ſhould be exalted above Meaſure.*

Q. *What are thoſe Graces that God doth eſpecially excite, to keep his Children from Sin?*

A. They are Three, Faith, Fear and Love.

Q. *How doth Faith keep them from ſinning?*

A. Many ways, but more eſpecially by Two.

1. Firſt, As it lively repreſents unto us Eternal Rewards and Puniſhments; and make them as real as they are certain. Heb. 11. 1. *Now Faith is the Subſtance of things hoped for, the Evidence of things not ſeen.*

2. Secondly, As it repreſents unto us, God to be the Obſerver of our Actions, who muſt hereafter be the Judge of them. For by Faith we ſee him who is inviſible.

Q. *How doth the Fear of God keep Men from Sin?*

A. By poſſeſſing our Hearts with awfull Thoughts of his dread Majeſty, whoſe Power is infinite, and whoſe Juſtice is ſtrict and impartial. Pſal. 4. 4. *Stand in awe and ſin not.*

Q. *How doth the Love of God keep Men from Sin?*

A. By working in them an holy Ingenuity, and Sympathy of Affection with God: Loving what he loves, and

hating what he hates; and therefore those who love God, will certainly hate Iniquity. Psal. 97. 10. *Ye that love the Lord hate Evil.*

Q. *What do we pray for in this part of the Petition*, Deliver us from Evil?

A. We pray,

1. That if it shall please God to lead us into Temptation, yet he would not leave us under the Power of Temptation, but would make a way for us to escape, that we might be able to bear it.

2. That if at any time Temptations should prevail over us, God would not leave us under the Power of Sin, but raise us again by true Repentance; that so we may at last be delivered from the great Evil of Obduration and Impenitency.

3. That God would not onely deliver us from gross and self condemning Sins, but from every evil Way and Work.

4. That he would be pleased to deliver us not onely from what is in it self sinfull; but from all the Occasions and Appearances of Evil.

Q. *After the Petitions of the Lord's Prayer, what next followeth to be considered?*

A. The Doxology or Praise, in these words, *For thine*,&c.

Q. *Of what consisteth this Doxology?*

A. Of four of God's most glorious Attributes. His Soreignty, *Thine is the Kingdom*; His Omnipotence, *Thine is the Power*; His Excellency, *Thine is the Glory*; His Eternity, *All these are Thine for ever.*

Q. *What observe you in the Manner of our Saviour's ascribing these Attributes to God?*

A. First, The Eminency of them, intimated in the Particle, *The*; The Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory; signifying his the Highest and Chiefest of all these. And,

Secondly,

Secondly, The Propriety of them in the Particle, *Thine*, to note to us that they are God's onely Originally, Independently, and Unchangeably.

Q. *What obſerve you from the illative Particle*, For, *when ye ſay*, For thine is the Kingdom, &c.

A. This word carries in it the Force of a Reaſon, both why we ſhould pray unto God, and why we may expect to be heard when we pray.

Q. *How is it a Reaſon for us to pray unto God?*

A. We pray unto God, becauſe he alone is able to relieve us, *For his is the Kingdom, and the Power and the Glory for ever.*

Q. *How is it a Reaſon for us to expect, that God ſhould hear our Prayers?*

A. Many ways.

1. His is the Kingdom, and we his Subjects; and therefore we may depend on him as our King, for Help and Protection.

2. His is the Power, and therefore he is able to do for us abundantly above what we are able to ask or think.

3. His is the Glory, and therefore what we ask for his Honour and Praiſe ſhall be granted us.

4. All theſe are his for ever, and therefore we may be aſſured, that at no time, the Prayer of Faith ſhall be in vain.

Q. *What obſerve you from our Saviour's teaching us to uſe theſe Arguments and Pleas in our Prayers to God?*

A. Two things.

1. In our Prayers we ought to plead with God, by weighty and inforcing Reaſons.

2. That the moſt prevailing Arguments in Prayer, are to be taken from the Attributes of God.

Q. *What benefit is there in uſing ſuch Reaſons, ſince God cannot by them be moved to alter his Purpoſes?*

A The ſtronger our Reaſons are to ſue for Mercies, the more fervent will our Prayers be, and the more confirmed our Faith.

Q. *How*

Q. *How doth the Consideration of the Kingdom's being God's, confirm our Faith that we shall obtain what we pray for?*

A. Many ways.

1. The Kingdom is God's, and therefore he will see that his Name be hallowed in it; for he is a King jealous of his Honour.

2. The Kingdom is God's, therefore he will take care for the Establishment and Enlargement of it; since it is his own Interest and Concern.

3. The Kingdom is God's, and therefore he will look to be obeyed in it, without which Royalty is but Pageantry.

4. The Kingdom is God's, and therefore we may expect our daily Bread, and temporal Accommodations; for it is a Kingly Office to provide things necessary for their Subjects.

5. The Kingdom is God's, and therefore we pray to him for Pardon and Forgiveness, since it is a Royal Prerogative to forgive Offenders.

6. The Kingdom is God's, and therefore we may pray in Faith, that he would deliver us from Temptations, and the Evils to which we are tempted; for one great End of Government is to protect the Subjects from the Assaults of their cruel Enemies.

Q. *Which is the second Attribute ascribed unto God in the Doxology of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. Power; in these words, *And the Power.*

Q. *How is the Power of God distinguished?*

A. Into his absolute and his ordinate Power.

Q. *What call you the absolute Power of God?*

A. The absolute Power of God is that whereby he is simply able, to produce whatsoever is possible to be, *i. e.* all things which imply not Contradiction.

Q. *What call you God's ordinate Power?*

A. God's ordinate Power, is that whereby he is able to produce those things, which according to his Will shall come to pass.

Q. *Why*

Q. *Why is it called God's ordinate Power?*

A. Becauſe the Effects of it are limited by the Ordination of his Wiſdom, and Will. Pſal. 115. 3. *But our God is in the Heavens, he hath done whatſoever he pleaſed.* Pſal. 135. 6. *Whatſoever the Lord pleaſed, that did he in Heaven and Earth, in the Seas and all deep Places.*

Q. *Is God's Power in it ſelf infinite?*

A. It is, for his Power is his Eſſence.

Q. *How doth it appear that God's Power is infinite?*

A. 1. By the Works of Creation, for it requires an infinite Power to bring ſomething out of nothing.

2. By the many Miracles which have been wrought in the World, above and contrary to the Courſe of Nature.

Q. *How then have many Men wrought Miracles, as* Moſes, Elijah, *and the Apoſtles?*

A. They wrought them not by any proper Vertue of their own, but onely as the Moral Inſtruments at whoſe Preſence or Interceſſion, God was pleaſed to manifeſt his Power, as a Seal to that Commiſſion they had received from him.

Q. *Is God's Power infinite likewiſe in the common Effects of Nature?*

A. It is, for it is no leſs Power that preſerves and moves the Creatures, than did at firſt Create them.

Q. *Is there nothing impoſſible with God?*

A. Yes, there are ſeveral things which God cannot do, becauſe he is Omnipotent.

Q. *What are they?*

A. Such as in the General, the doing of them would deny him to be God; or to be holy, or to be wiſe.

Q. *What are they more particularly?*

A. God cannot do things that are contradictory, or rather ſuch things cannot be done, as to make the ſame thing to be, and not to be at the ſame time; or that the ſame Body ſhould at once have quantity and extenſion in Heaven, and

and no quantity nor extension in the Host, as the Papists affirm of their breaden God, for this were contrary to his Wisdom.

2. God cannot do any thing that may justly bring upon him the Imputation of Sin; for this were contrary to his Holiness.

3. God cannot do any thing that may argue him mutable and inconstant, for this were contrary to his Being. 2 Tim. 2. 13. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithfull; he cannot deny himself.* Heb. 6. 18. *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lye.*

Q. *Is it not a Diminution of the Power of God, that he cannot do those things?*

A. No; for these things argue Weakness, and Defect, not Power.

Q. *Why hath our Saviour taught us to subjoin this Acknowledgment of the Power of God to our Petitions?*

A. To encourage our Faith, by considering that whatsoever we ask, we ask it of a God who is able to give it us, yea, and to do for us abundantly above whatsoever we are able to ask or think.

Q. *What is the third Attribute ascribed to God in the Doxology?*

A. Glory in these words, *And the Glory.*

Q. *What is Glory?*

A. Glory is any Perfection or Excellency that either is, or deserves to be accompanied with Fame and Renown.

Q. *How is God's Glory distinguished?*

A. Into his Essential and Declarative Glory.

Q. *What is the Essential Glory of God?*

A. All those Attributes, which Eternally and Immutably belong unto the Divine Nature: So Holiness is his Glory. Exod. 15. 11. *Glorious in Holiness.* His Power is his Glory. 2 Thes. 1. 9. *They shall be punished from*, i. e. *by the Glory of his Power.* His Majesty is his Glory. Psal. 145. 11. *I will speak*

of

of the glorious Honour of thy Majeſty: His Grace and Mercy is his Glory. Epheſ. 1. 6. *To the Praiſe of the Glory of his Grace.* And from all theſe united, reſults the Glory of his Name. Deut. 28. 58. *That thou mayeſt fear this Glorious and Fearfull Name, the Lord thy God.*

Q. *What is the Declarative Glory of God?*

A. The Manifeſtation of his Attributes, ſo that they are obſerved to his Praiſe and Honour.

Q. *What is it to glorify God?*

A. To glorifie God, is to admire, and celebrate the Divine Attributes, ſhining forth in thoſe ways and works, wherein he is pleaſed to expreſs them.

Q. *Do we by glorifying God add any thing to his Glory?*

A. We can neither add unto, nor diminiſh from the Eſſential Glory of God, for his infinite Perfections are the ſame for ever. But we may add to his Declarative Glory, by ſetting forth his Attributes; and we detract from it by hindering the Manifeſtation of them.

Q. *By what Means doth God declare his Glory?*

A. By three eſpecially.

1. By his Works. Pſal. 19. 1. *The Heavens declare the Glory of God: and the Firmament ſheweth his handy Work.*

2. By his Word, which diſcovers to us thoſe Attributes, which we could never have known by the Works of Creation and Providence; and therefore both Law and Goſpel, are ſaid to be glorious. 2 Cor. 3. 9. *For if the Miniſtration of Condemnation be Glory, much more doth the Miniſtration of Righteouſneſs exceed in Glory.*

3. By his Son, who is the Brightneſs of his Glory. Heb. 13. *Who being the Brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon.* And in whom the Perfections of the God-head are moſt viſibly diſplayed.

Q. *Why doth our Saviour in the Doxology, peculiarly appropriate Glory unto God*: Thine is the Glory *?*

A. For three Reaſons.

1. Becauſe all that is excellent and glorious in the Crea-

tures, is in God infinitely more perfect than in them; being neither limited by his Nature, nor allayed with Contraries. 1 John 1. 5. *That God is Light, and in him is no Darkneſs at all.*

2. Becauſe all Glory in reſpect of God, is but Darkneſs and Obſcurity: Job 25. 5. *Behold even to the Moon, and it ſhineth not; yea, the Stars are not pure in his Sight.*

3. Becauſe all the Excellencies and Glories of Creatures, ſerve onely to ſet forth, and declare the Glory of God.

Q. *Why hath our Saviour added the Acknowledgment of God's Glory, at the End of the Petitions he hath taught us to preſent?*

A. That the Conſideration thereof may be a Means to ſtrengthen our Faith, for the obtaining thoſe good things which we pray for.

Q. *How is the Conſideration of the Glory of God an Argument to ſtrengthen our Faith in Prayer?*

A. Many ways, according to the Petitions we prefer.

1. The Glory is God's, therefore his Name ſhall be hallowed; for to ſanctifie the Name of God is to glorifie him: Lev. 10. 3. *I will be ſanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the People I will be glorified.*

2. The Glory is God's, and therefore his Kingdom ſhall come; for where ſhould a King be honoured, but in his Kingdom?

3. The Glory is God's, therefore his Will ſhall be done, for our Obedience is the greateſt Glory we can give. John 15. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit, ſo ſhall ye be my Diſciples.*

4. The Glory is God's, and therefore he will provide for us daily Bread; for it is not God's Honour, that any of his Family ſhould want things convenient for them. Exod. 16. 7. *And in the Morning, then ſhall ye ſee the Glory of the Lord.*

5. The Glory is God's, and therefore he will forgive our Treſpaſſes, for it is his Honour and Royalty to pardon penitent Offenders. Prov. 19 11. *And it is his Glory to paſs over a Tranſgreſſion.* Epheſ. 1. 6, 7. *To the Praiſe of the*

Glory

Glory of his Grace. Verſ. 7. *In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveneſs of Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace.*

6. The Glory is God's, and therefore he will deliver us from the Aſſaults of our Enemies; for it is his Honour to protect his own Subjects.

Q. *What obſerve you from that Particle,* For ever?

A. That God and his Attributes are Eternal.

Q. *What is Eternity?*

A. Eternity is a Duration, that hath neither Beginning nor End, nor Succeſſion of Parts: or it is the compleat Poſſeſſion of an endleſs Life all at once.

Q. *What collect you hence?*

A. Two things.

1. The Duration of God is not to be meaſured by Days, or Years; and that he waxeth not elder, neither hath continued longer this Day, than from the beginning of Time.

2. That in ſtrict propriety of Speech, God onely is, and that it is onely allowable for want of Expreſſions, to ſay, that he either was, or ſhall be; and therefore he calls his Name, *I am.* Exod. 3. 14. *I am, hath ſent me unto you.*

Q. *How prove you that God is Eternal?*

A. Both by Scripture, and Reaſon.

Q. *What Scriptures prove the Eternity of God?*

A. Several; eſpecially Pſalm 102. 25, 26, 27. *Thou art the ſame, and thy Years ſhall have no End.* Pſal. 90. 2. *From everlaſting to everlaſting thou art God.* 1 Tim. 1. 17. *To the King eternal, immortal, be Honour and Glory.*

Q. *How do you demonſtrate the Eternity of God by Reaſon?*

A. There muſt of neceſſity be a firſt Cauſe of all things: But that which is the firſt Cauſe of all things cannot be made by any, and therefore is from everlaſting: Neither can it ceaſe to be, becauſe it is not dependent on any, and therefore muſt be to Everlaſting.

Q. *What Duties doth the ſerious Conſideration of God's Eternity oblige us to?*

A. 1. To venerate and adore ſo great and inconceivable an Attribute.

2. To leave the Care of all future Events, whether concerning our own private or the publick Intereſts, to his Eternal Wiſdom and Providence, who for ever lives to mind them.

3. To give unto him the ſame Honour, Reſpect and Service, as his Saints have done in former Generations.

Q. *What encouragement hath our Faith to expect the Mercies we pray for, from the Conſideration of God's Eternity?*

A. That becauſe he is the ſame God, who in all Ages hath heard the Prayers of thoſe who truſt in him; therefore we may be aſſured, that if we have the ſame Diſpoſitions and Affections with the Saints of Old, we ſhall obtain the ſame Mercies and Favours. Heb. 1. 12. *But thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail.*

Q. *What ſignifies that Particle* Amen, *which is the End and Cloſe of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. As in the beginning of a Speech it is Aſſertory, and ſignifies, *ſo it is*; ſo in the end of it, it is Precatory, and ſignifies, *ſo be it*; which denotes our earneſt Deſires, to have our Prayers heard, and our Petitions granted.

Q. *What learn you from hence, that our Saviour hath taught us to conclude our Prayers with,* Amen?

A. I learn two things.

1. That we ought to pray with underſtanding, and therefore not in an unknown Tongue: for who can ſay *Amen*, to what he underſtands not? 1 Cor. 14. 16. *How ſhall he that occupieth the Room of the unlearned, ſay* Amen *at the giving of thanks, ſeeing he underſtandeth not what thou ſayeſt?*

2. That all our Prayers ought to be preſented to God, with fervent zeal and affection. 1 Theſ. 5. 17. *Pray without ceaſing.*

Q. *What is Prayer?*

A. Prayer is an humble repreſentation of our wants and deſires to God, through the aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt in the Name of Chriſt, for things according to his Will, with reference to his Glory.

Q. *What*

Q. *What is it to pray by the Spirit, or by the aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt?*

A. To pray by the Spirit, is to preſent our requeſts to God, with holy and fervent affections excited in us by the Holy Ghoſt. Rom. 8. 26. *But the Spirit it ſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groanings, which cannot be uttered.*

Q. *May thoſe have the Spirit of Prayer, who have not the Gift of Prayer?*

A. Yes, they may; and on the contrary, ſome may have the Gift of Prayer, who pray not by the Spirit, for they who uſe preſcribed and ſet Forms of Prayer, pray by the Spirit, when their Petitions are accompanied with fervent affections, ſtirred in them by the Holy Ghoſt; and again ſome who are moſt fluent in conceived Prayer, may pray onely from the ſtrength of their natural parts and endowments.

Q. *But doth not the uſe of Forms damp and quench the Spirit of Prayer?*

A. Forms indeed are too often uſed formally, and ſo is any other kind of Prayer; yet it is the trueſt Teſt, and the higheſt Excellency of praying by the Spirit, when we are fervent in putting up theſe requeſts to God, where neither Novelty, Variety, nor Copiouſneſs of Expreſſions can be ſuſpected to move our affections, but onely the genuine Importance of the matter which we pray for, though in preſcribed words.

Q. *To whom muſt our Prayers be directed?*

A. To God onely, and not to Saints, or Angels.

Q. *How ought we to conceive of God when we pray to him?*

A. As an infinitely glorious, wiſe, powerfull and gracious Being, whoſe preſence is every where, whoſe providence and goodneſs is over all things, and thus we pray at once, to each Perſon of the ever bleſſed Trinity.

Q. *May we not particularly addreſs our Prayers, to ſome one Perſon of the Trinity?*

A. We may; eſpecially in thoſe Caſes wherein their parti-

particular Offices and Diſpenſations are more immediately concerned.

Q. *What things ought we to pray for?*

A. Onely ſuch as are according to the Will of God. 1 John 5. 14. *That if we ask any thing according to his Will, he heareth us.*

Q. *What are thoſe things which are according to the Will of God?*

A. Chiefly ſpiritual Bleſſings. 1 Theſ. 4. 3. *For this is the Will of God, even our ſanctification, that we ſhould abſtain from Fornication.* And for theſe we ought to pray abſolutely and importunately.

Q. *May we not alſo pray for Temporal Mercies?*

A. We may: but as theſe are promiſed onely conditionally, ſo we ought to pray, that God would be pleaſed to beſtow them upon us, if it may ſtand with his Will and Glory, and our good and benefit.

Q. *How muſt we direct our Prayers to God?*

A. 1. In the Name of Chriſt, truſting onely in his Merits and Mediations, for acceptance and anſwer. John 15. 16. *That whatſoever ye ſhall ask of the Father in my Name, he may give it you.*

2. In Faith and Perſuaſion of being heard. James 1. 6. *But let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering.* Mark 11. 24. *What things ſoever ye deſire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye ſhall have them.*

3. With Fervency and Affection. James 5. 16. *The effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much.*

Q. *What ends ought we to propound to our ſelves in begging Bleſſings at God's hands?*

A. Chiefly the Glory of God, ſincerely purpoſing to improve thoſe Bleſſings, which by our Prayers we ſhall receive in his Service, and to his Praiſe. Pſal. 50. 15. *And call upon me in the Day of Trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorifie me.*

Q. *What directions have we concerning the Seaſons, and Frequency of praying?*

A. The

A. The Scripture commands us to pray without ceaſing. 1 Theſ. 5. 17. *Pray without ceaſing.* To pray always and not to faint. Luke 18. 1. *And he ſpake a Parable to this end, that Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* To pray always with all Prayer and Supplication. Epheſ. 6. 18. *Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit.*

Q. *Muſt we therefore be always ſo actually ingaged in this Duty, as to do nothing but pray?*

A. No: For therefore we pray that we may obtain Grace from God, to perform other Duties of Religion, and a Chriſtian Life; neither ought the Duties of our particular Callings to be neglected by us, for we juſtle out one Duty by another; beſides the ſinfull Omiſſion of what we ſhould perform, that which we do perform becomes unacceptable, becauſe unſeaſonable; and ſo we commit two Sins in doing one Duty.

Q. *What then is it to pray without ceaſing?*

A. Prayer may be ſaid to be without ceaſing four ways.

1. When we obſerve a conſtant Courſe of a Prayer at fixt and appointed Times. Thus *Gen.* 8. ult. God promiſed that *Winter and Summer, Day and Night, ſhould not ceaſe.* And ſo the daily Sacrifice is called a continual burnt-offering, *Exod.* 29. 42. And yet it was offered onely Morning and Evening.

2. When we are frequent and importunate in our Prayers, ſo *Acts* 12. 5. The Church is ſaid to make Prayers for *Peter* without ceaſing. And our Saviour ſpake the Parable of the importunate Widow to this end, *That men ought always to pray and not to faint*, Luke 18. 1.

3. When we frequently dart up ſhort mental Prayers and Ejaculations unto God; which we may and ought to do, whatſoever elſe we are employed about. Neh. 2. 4. *So I prayed to the God of Heaven.*

4. When we keep our hearts in a praying Frame and Temper, ſo that they are on all Occaſions fit and ready

to

to pour out themſelves before God in Prayer; and thus we habitually pray always.

Q. *What muſt we obſerve to maintain and cheriſh ſuch a praying Spirit?*

A. Two things eſpecially.

1. That we ingulf not our ſelves too deeply in the Buſineſſes and Pleaſures of this Life, for theſe will dark and deaden the heart to Prayer.

2. That we fall not into the Commiſſion of any known and preſumptuous Sin. For guilt will fill us with ſlaviſh Fear and Shame, and both will drive us from God.

Q. *What are the kinds of Prayer?*

A. Three.

1. Publick, As we are Members of the Church.
2. Private, As we ſtand engaged in Family Relation. And,
3. Secret, As we are particular Chriſtians.

Q. *Who is to ſend up publick Prayers?*

A. The Miniſter, and all the Congregation joining with him. And theſe Prayers, though they muſt needs be more general, yet with all are more effectual than any other. Matt. 18. 19. *Again, I ſay unto you, that if two of you ſhall agree on Earth, as touching any thing that they ſhall ask, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven.*

Q. *Who is to make private or family Prayers?*

A. Every Maſter and Governour of a Family. And this he is not to do ſeldomer than every Morning and Evening. In the Morning, Prayer is the Key that opens the Treaſury of God's Mercies: In the Evening it is the Key that ſhuts us up under his Protection and Safe-guard.

Two

TWO

SERMONS

Preached by the ſame

AUTHOR.

A Diſcourſe upon Providenec.

Matth. x. 29, 30.

Are not two Sparrows ſold for a Farthing? and one of them ſhall not fall on the ground without your Father.

But the very Hairs of your Head are all numbred.

THe Myſtery of God's Providence, next to that of Man's Redemption, is the moſt Sublime and Inſcrutable. 'Tis eaſie in both to run our ſelves off our Reaſon. For as Reaſon confeſſeth it ſelf at a loſs when it attempts a ſearch into thoſe Eternal decrees of electing Sinners to Salvation, and deſigning Chriſt to ſave them, ſo muſt it likewiſe when it attempts to trace out all thoſe entangled Mazes and Labyrinths wherein the Divine Providence walks. We may ſooner tire reaſon in ſuch a purſuit than ſatisfie it, unleſs it be ſome kind of ſatisfaction when we have driven it to a Non-plus, to relieve our ſelves with an ὦ βάθος; O the depth of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God! How unſearchable are his Judgments and his ways paſt finding out! This knowledge therefore being too wonderful for us, I ſhall not preſume to conduct you into that ſecret Place, that pavillion of Clouds, and ſurrounding Darkneſs where God ſits holding the Rudder of the World, and ſteering it through all the Floatings of Caſualty and Contingency to his own forecordained ends, where he graſps and turns the great Engine of Nature in his hands, faſtening one Pin, and looſing another, moving and removing the ſeveral Wheels of it, and framing the whole according to the Eternal Idea of his own under-

ſtanding. Let us content us, to conſider ſo much of God's Providence as may affect us with comfort in reflecting on that particular care which he takes of us, rather than with wonder and aſtoniſhment by too bold a prying into thoſe hidden methods whereby he exerciſeth it.

Our Saviour Chriſt in this Chapter giving Commiſſion to his Apoſtles, and ſending them forth to preach the Goſpel, obviates an Objection they might make, concerning the great danger that would certainly attend ſuch an undertaking. To ſend them upon ſuch an hated employment, would be no other than to thruſt them upon the Rage and Malice of the World, to ſend them forth as Sheep into the midſt of Wolves, who would doubtleſs worry and devour them; ſure we are to have our Meſſage derided, our Perſons injured, and that holy name of thine on which we ſummon them to believe, Blaſphemed and Reviled; and tho our word may prove a word of life to ſome few of the Hearers, yet to us who are the Preachers of it, it will prove no other than Death. A vile and wretched world the whileſt, when the Goſpel of Peace and Reconciliation ſhall thus ſtir up Enmity and Perſecution againſt the Embaſſadours, who are appointed to Proclaim it!

Now to this our Saviour Anſwers.

Firſt, By ſhewing what the extent of their Adverſaries power is, how far it can reach, and what miſchief it can do when God permits it to rage to the very utmoſt. And this he doth in the 28*th.* Verſe, the verſe immediately foregoing the Text: *Fear not them who kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul.* Or as St. *Luke* expreſſeth it, Chap. 12. 4. *They can kill the Body, but after that, have no more they can do.* Alas, are ſuch Men to be feared, who when they do their worſt, can only deſtroy your worſt part, which if they do not, yet Accidents or Diſeaſes will? What, are your Bodies but Cloggs to your Spirit, and Priſons to your Souls? And certainly thoſe Enemies are not very formidable,

midable, who when they moſt think to hurt you, only knock off your Clogg, or break open your Priſon and let your Souls eſcape to their deſired liberty.

Secondly, Our Saviour anſwers that though they can Kill the body when God permits them; yet they cannot ſo much as touch it without his permiſſion. And this he doth in the words of my Text, by ſhewing how punctual and particular God's providence is, even over the ſmalleſt, and thoſe that ſeem the moſt trifling occurrences of the World: a Sparrow, whoſe price is but mean, two of them valued at a Farthing, which ſome make to be the tenth part of a *Roman* penny, and was certainly one of their leaſt Coins, whoſe life therefore is but contemptible, and whoſe flight ſeems but giddy and at random; yet it falls not to the ground, neither lights any where without your Father. His all-wiſe providence hath before appointed what bough it ſhall pitch on; what grains it ſhall pick up, where it ſhall lodge, and where it ſhall build, on what it ſhall live, and when it ſhall die. And if your Fathers providence be ſo Critical about the ſmall concernments even of Sparrows; fear not ye, for you are of more value than many Sparrows, yea, of more value than many Men.

Our Saviour adds, The very hairs of your head are all numbred: God keeps an account even of that ſtringy Excrement. He knows how many fall off, and the preciſe number of thoſe that remain: and no wonder that he knows the number of our Sins, which are far more.

Hence we learn that God governs the meaneſt, the moſt inconſiderable, and contemptible Occurrences in the World by an exact and particular Providence. Do you ſee thouſand little Motes and Atomes wandring up and down in a Sun-beam? It is God that ſo peoples it; and he guides their innumerable and irregular ſtrayings. Not a Duſt flies in a beaten Road; but God raiſeth it, conducts its uncertain motion, and by his particular care conveys it to the certain

certain place he had before appointed for it, nor ſhall the moſt fierce and tempeſtuous wind hurry it any farther. And if God's care and providence reacheth thus to theſe minute things, which are but as it were the circumſtances of Nature; and little acceſſaries to the World, certainly Man who is the head and Lord of it, for whoſe ſake and ſervice other Creatures were formed, may very well be confident that God exerciſeth an eſpecial and moſt accurate providence over him, and his affairs.

By this you ſee what the ſubject is intended to treat of, even the over-ruling and all diſpoſing providence of God, not a Sparrow, not a hair of your heads falls to the ground without your Father.

But before I proceed farther, I muſt take notice of two things in the words.

Firſt, That our Saviour ſpeaking here of the providence of God, aſcribes to him the name of our Father: God hath many names and titles attributed unto him in the Scriptures; as Father, Lord, Creator, Redeemer, Judge, King and God. But God is a word that denotes his Eſſence, Lord is a title of his Dominion, Creator marks out his omnipotence, Redeemer commends his Love, Judge is a name of fear and aſtoniſhment, and King is a title of Royal Majeſty: But this indearing name of Father ſignifies unto us his providence, for from him as from a Father do we expect and receive guidance and government.

Secondly, Whereas nothing comes to paſs without our Heavenly Father, this may be underſtood three ways; without his permiſſion, without his ordination, and concurrence, without his over-ruling and directing it to his own ends.

Firſt, No evil comes to paſs without his permiſſive providence.

Secondly, No good comes to paſs without his ordaining and concurring providence.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Nothing whether good or evil comes to paſs without the over-ruling Providence of our Father, guiding and directing it to his own ends. But concerning this diſtinction of permiſſive, concurring and over ruling Providence, I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more hereafter. My work at preſent ſhall be,

Firſt, To deſcribe unto you what the providence of God is in the general notion thereof.

Secondly, To prove that all affairs and occurrences in the World, are guided and governed by Divine Providence.

Thirdly, To anſwer ſome puzling queſtions and doubts concerning the Providence of God, and ſome objections that may be made againſt it.

Firſt, Let us ſee what providence is. Take it in this deſcription: Providence is an Act of God, whereby according to his eternal and moſt wiſe Counſel, he preſerves and governs all things, and directs them all to their ends, but chiefly to his own glory.

This providence conſiſteth in two things. Preſervation and Government of his Creatures.

Firſt. One remarkable Act of the Providence of God is the preſervation of his Creatures in their beings, He preſerves them,

Firſt, In their ſpecies and kind, by the conſtant ſucceſſion of them one after another; ſo that though the individuals of them are mortal and periſh, yet the ſpecies or kind is immortal. There is no kind of Creature that was at firſt made by God, but it ſtill continueth to this very day, and ſhall ſo do to the end of the World. And truly it is the wonderful Providence of God thus to perpetuate the Creation; that whereas we ſee an inbred enmity in ſome ſorts of Creatures againſt others, yet his Wiſdom ſo ſways their mutual antipathies, that none of them ſhall ever prevail to a total Extirpation and Deſtruction of the other.

Secondly, He preſerves them likewiſe by his providence in

in their individual and particular beings, while they have a room to fill up, and an Office to diſcharge in the Univerſe. Each Fly and Worm, as well as Man (who is but the greater Worm of the two) hath a work to do in the World; and till that be finiſh'd God ſuſtains its being: Nor ſhall the weakeſt Creature be deſtroyed, within the prefixed time that God hath ſet to its duration. There are none of us here alive this day, but have abundant cauſe thankfully to acknowledge the powerful and merciful providence of God in preſerving us in, and reſcuing us from many dangers and deaths to which we ſtood expoſed. It is only his Viſitation that hath hitherto preſerved our Spirits, and to his never failing providence we owe it that ſuch frail and feeble Creatures, who are liable to be cruſh'd before the Moth, liable to ſo many diſeaſes and accidents, have yet a name among the Living, and have not yet failed from off the face of the Earth.

Secondly, As God preſerves, ſo he governs all things by his providence; and this Government conſiſts in two things. Direction of the Creatures actions, and diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments according to the Actions of his rational Creatures.

Firſt, God by his governing providence directs all the Actions of his Creatures, yea, and by the ſecret, but efficacious illapſe and penetration of the Divine Influence; he powerfully ſways and determines them which way he pleaſeth. And from this part of his Providence, brancheth forth his permiſſion of Evil Actions, and his concurrence to good, both by the aſſiſtance of his common and likewiſe of his ſpecial Grace; and laſtly, his general influence into all the Actions of our Lives; all which we are inabled to perform by the Almighty power of the Divine Providence, which as at firſt it beſtowed upon us natural faculties; ſo by a conſtant concurrence doth exite and aſſiſt thoſe faculties to their reſpective operations.

Secondly,

Secondly, God by his governing providence diſtributes rewards and puniſhments according to our actions: And this part of his providence is oftentimes remarkable even in this preſent Life, when we ſee retributions of Divine Mercy and Vengeance, ſignally proportioned according to Mens demerits, but the more eſpecial manifeſtation and execution of it is commonly adjourned to the Life to come; and then all the ſeeming inequalities of God's diſpenſations here will be fully adjuſted in the eternal recompence of the Godly, and eternal puniſhment of the wicked and impenitent.

Now by this Almighty providence God over-rules and ſways all things to his own glory. There is nothing comes to paſs, but God hath his ends in it, and will certainly make his own ends out of it; though the World ſeem to run at random, and affairs to be hudled together in blind confuſion and rude diſorder; yet God ſees and knows the Concatenation of all cauſes and effects, and ſo governs them, that he makes a perfect harmony out of all thoſe ſeeming Jarrings and Diſcords. As you may obſerve it in the wheels of a Watch, though they all move with contrary motions one to the other, yet they are uſeful and neceſſary to make it go right: ſo is it in theſe inferiour things, the proceedings of Divine providence, are all regular and orderly to his own ends, in all the thwartings and contrarieties of ſecond cauſes. We have this expreſs'd in that myſterious Viſion, *Eccleſ.* 1. 18. where the providences of God are ſet forth by the Emblem of a Wheel within a Wheel, one interſecting and croſſing another; yet they are deſcribed to be full of eyes round about. What is this, but to denote unto us, that though providences are as turning and unſtable as Wheels; though they are as thwart and croſs as one Wheel within another, yet theſe Wheels are all Nailed round with Eyes; God ſees and chuſes his way in the moſt intricate and intangled providences that are; and ſo governs

all things, that whilſt each purſues its own inclination, they are all over-ruled to promote his glory. This is providence, the two great parts of which are preſervation and Government; and the great end of both theſe the glory of the Almighty and All-wiſe God. And this is it which our Saviour ſpeaks of when he tells the *Jews*, *John* 5. 17. *My Father worketh hitherto* (*viz.* in preſerving and governing his Creatures) *and I work.*

Secondly, The ſecond General propounded, was to demonſtrate to you, That all things in the World are governed by the Divine Providence. The Old Philoſophers among the *Heathens*, had very different notions concerning the Government of the World. Some held that all things were governed by an imperious and inevitable fate to which God himſelf was Subject: So *Chryſippus*, and the *Stoicks*. Others thought that all was left to blind chance, and whatſoever came to paſs here below was only caſual and fortuitous; ſo the *Epicureans:* Others that the great God regarded only the more glorious affairs of Heaven, but had committed the care of Earthly concernments unto inferiour Spirits as his under Officers and Deputies: So moſt of the *Platoniſts*, though their maſter was Orthodox. Others, that God's providence reached only to the great and important matters of this World; but that it was too much a diſparagement to his infinite Majeſty to look after the motion of every Straw and Feather, and to take care of every trivial and inconſiderable Occurrence in this World. So ſpeaks *Cicero* in his Book *de natura Deorum*, *Magna Dii curant, parva negligunt.* [*vide Ariani Epictet. lib.* 1. *cap.* 12.] How much better is that moſt excellent ſaying of St. *Auſtin*, *Tu ſic curas unumquemq; noſtrum, tanquam ſolum cures, & ſic omnes tanquam ſingulos.* God takes as much care of every particular, as if each were all, and as much care of all, as if all were but one particular.

And

And to demonſtrate this all-diſpoſing providence of God, I ſhall take two ways.

Firſt, From the conſideration of the nature and perfection of the Deity.

Secondly, From the contemplation of that beauty and order which we may obſerve in the World.

It is moſt neceſſary that we ſhould have our hearts well Eſtabliſh'd in the firm and unwavering belief of this truth, that whatſoever comes to paſs, be it good or evil, we may look up to the hand and diſpoſal of all, to God; and if it be good, may acknowledge it with praiſe; if evil, bear it with patience; ſince he diſpenſeth both the one and the other; the good to reward us, and the evil to try us.

Now firſt, To demonſtrate it from the being and nature of God.

This I ſhall do in theſe following Propoſitions, which I ſhall lay down as ſo many ſteps and gradations.

Firſt, That there is a God is undoubtedly clear by the light of Nature. Never was there any People ſo barbarous and ſtupid, but did firmly aſſent to this truth without any other proof than the deep impreſs upon their hearts, and the obſervation of viſible objects, that there was a Deity. 'Tis neither a Problem of reaſon, nor yet ſtrictly an Article of Faith, but the unforced dictate of every Man's Natural Conſcience; where Conſcience is not violently perverted, and under the force of thoſe vices, whoſe intereſt it is that there ſhould be no God. Never was there any Nation that worſhipp'd none, but their great ſottiſhneſs was, that they worſhipp'd many.

Secondly, As all confeſs there is a God, ſo likewiſe that this God muſt neceſſarily have in himſelf all perfections, as being the firſt Principle and Source of all things. All theſe perfections of Wiſdom, Power, Knowledge, or the like, that we ſee ſcattered up and down among the Creatures, muſt all be concentred in God; and that in a far more

eminent degree, becauſe whatever is found in Creatures is but derived and borrowed from him, and therefore it muſt needs follow, that becauſe it is of more perfection to be infinite in each perfection, therefore God is infinite in them all.

Thirdly, Among all the perfections that are diſperſed among the Creatures, the moſt excellent is knowledge and underſtanding. For this is a property that agrees only to Angels and Men, who are the top and flower of the Creation; and therefore certainly this perfection of the Creatures is to be found in God: yea, and that infinitely. His knowledge and wiſdom therefore is infinite.

Fourthly, His knowledge being thus infinite, he both knows himſelf, and all other things in himſelf.

Firſt, God perfectly knows himſelf, he knows the boundleſs extent of his own being, and though he be infinite and incomprehenſible to all others, yet is he finite and comprehended to himſelf: and hence it follows,

Secondly, That he knows particularly all other things. For if he knew himſelf perfectly, he muſt needs know all things beſides himſelf; becauſe none can perfectly know himſelf, that doth not fully know all that his power and ſtrength can reach unto. But now there is nothing which the power of God cannot reach, for by his power he Created all things. And therefore knowing his own Eſſence which is the cauſe of all, he knows every thing in the fecundity of his Eſſence. Thus we have demonſtrated it from the principles of Reaſon, that God neceſſarily knows all things. But providence denotes more than knowledge. And therefore,

Fifthly, This knowledge that is in God, is not like that which we acquire; 'tis not a knowledge that depends upon the objects known, and forms Idea's from the contemplation of things already exiſting. But it is like the knowledge of an Artificer which cauſeth and produceth the

the things it comprehends. God knows them before they are; and by knowing them brings them to paſs. God knows all things ſaith St. *Auſtin, de Trinitat.* 15. *Not becauſe they are, but therefore they are becauſe God knew them.* So that his eternal knowledge and underſtanding gives being to every thing in the World.

Sixthly, It appertains to him who gives being to a thing to preſerve and govern it in its being. And therefore God giving being to all things, he alſo doth maintain and provide for them. 'Tis the very Law of Nature that he hath imprinted upon all his Creatures, to provide for their own Off ſpring. We ſee with what ſollicitous affection and tenderneſs, even brute and irrational Creatures do it. We are all the Off-ſpring of God, and he our common Parent. And therefore certainly he who hath inſpired ſuch Parental care in all things elſe, doth himſelf much more take care to give Education to all to which he hath given being.

Thus you ſee is proved that God's Providence reacheth unto all things. It might likewiſe be demonſtrated from God's omnipreſence. He is preſent every where, with, and in all his Creatures, and certainly he is not with them as an idle and unconcerned ſpectator, but as the directer, and governour of their Actions. But I ſhall proceed to the ſecond ſort of Arguments to prove the Divine providence.

And thoſe are taken from the conſideration of the frame and *Compages* of the World, the beauty and harmony which we ſee in Nature. The World is a Book wherein we may clearly read the wonderful Wiſdom of God. There is no Creature that doth not proclaim aloud, that God is the wiſe Creator and Governour of it. Who hath Gilded the Globe of the Sun and put on his Rays? Who hath ſet its bounds, and meaſured out its race, that it ſhould without failing, without error or miſtake, know how to make its daily and

Annual

Annual returns, and divide out times and ſeaſons to the World? Who hath given a particular Motion to all the Voluminous Orbs of Heaven, and beat out a path for every Star to walk in? Who hath ſwathed in the great and proud Ocean, with a Girdle of Sand, and reſtrains the Waves thereof, that though they be higher than the Land, yet they ſhall not overflow it? Who poiſeth the oppoſitions and contrarieties that are in Nature in ſo even a balance, that none of them ſhall ever prevail to a total Deſtruction of the other? Who brings up the great Family of brute Beaſts without tumult and diſorder? Do not all theſe great and wonderful works ſpeak forth the watchful Providence of God; who as he makes them by his word, ſo ſtill governs them by his Power? Therefore whatſoever we receive beneficial from them, whatſoever ſeems to provide for our neceſſities or conveniencies; it is God that hath ſo diſpenſed the Government of the World as to make it ſerviceable. If the Heavens turn and move for us, if the Stars as ſo many burning Torches light us in the obſcurity of the Night; if the Angels protect and defend us, let us acknowledge all this from the Providence of God only. It is he that turns the Heavens round their Axis: He lights up the Stars, he commands the Angels to be Miniſtring Spirits, Guards, and Centinels about us. If the Fire warm us, the Air refreſh us, the Earth ſupport us, it is God that hath kindled the Fire, that hath ſpread forth the Air, ſtabliſh'd the Earth upon the Pillars of his own decree that it ſhould not be ſhaken. And let us know too that when we want theſe Creatures for our ſuſtentation, if the Heavens, if the Angels, if the Earth, if the Sea, if all things ſhould fail us, yea, bandy and ſet themſelves againſt us, yet God who provides for us by them, can alſo if he pleaſe provide for us without them.

Thus we have diſpatch'd the two general inquiries, and have deſcribed and demonſtrated unto you the Divine Providence.

The

The third which remains, is to anſwer ſome queſtions and doubts which may be made, and have indeed been ſtrongly urged againſt the Government of the World by Providence.

As Firſt, If the World be governed by Providence, whence comes it that wicked and ungodly Men flouriſh and proſper? that God ſhines upon their Tabernacles, and drops fatneſs upon all their paths? Whereas on the contrary the Godly are often expoſed to Poverty, Contempt, Reproaches, perſecuted by Men, afflicted by God. Would it not be as agreeable to the Divine goodneſs, to caſt abroad the Wealth, the Pomp, and Glory of this World with an undeciding hand, leaving Men to ſcramble for them as they can, as that he ſhould with a particular and ſtudied care advance thoſe who contemn him, and cruſh thoſe who humbly truſt and depend upon him? Can I think the World is governed by the Providence of a juſt God, when uſually unjuſt Men govern the World under him? When ſwaggering Sinners, who deſpiſe him have power likewiſe to controul others? Is it Wiſdom to put a Sword into that hand which will turn the point of it againſt the giver? Or Juſtice to impower them to all thoſe Acts of Rapine, Violence, and Oppreſſion, which they commit? And ſhall we call that Providence which is neither wiſe nor juſt? One hath an unexhauſted ſtore to ſupply his diſſolute Luxury and Riot, another ſcarce neceſſaries to maintain a poor Life ſpent in the commands of God. Here a wicked *Dives*, who worſhipped no other God but his own Belly, feaſts deliciouſly every day; whileſt a Godly *Lazarus* ſtarves at this glutton's Gate, and entertains the Dogs with licking of his Sores. And what, doth God's particular care furniſh the glutton's Table with dayly exceſs, who will not give the remaining Scraps to God's Children? If there be Divine Providence in this, what is become of the Divine Equity? This inequality of Affairs ſeems to perſwade

ſwade that it is not the Holy and Righteous God of Heaven, but rather the God of this World, that Governs the concerns of it, and that he ſpoke truth, when he told our Saviour, *Luke* 4. 6. *The Power and Glory of this World is delivered unto me, and to whomſoever I will I give it.*

Now to Anſwer this. Firſt, This quarrel is not only of late commenced againſt Heaven; but it hath been the complaint of all Ages. It raiſed controverſies among the very Heathens themſelves, ſome of them upon this ground denying, and others again by whole treatiſes defending the Government of the World by Providence. And no wonder it ſhould puzzle them, ſince the very beſt of God's Saints and Servants have likewiſe ſtumbled at this ſtone of offence. Thus the Pſalmiſt, *Pſalm.* 73. 2, 3, &c. *As for me my Feet were almoſt gone, my ſteps had well nigh ſlipt: For I was envious at the Fooliſh, when I ſaw the proſperity of the Wicked.* So likewiſe the Prophet *Jeremy*, 12. 1. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee, yet let me talk with thee of thy Judgment: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked proſper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherouſly?* This therefore is an old grief, which in all Ages of the World hath been complained of. And though at firſt ſight it ſeems to confute the Providence of God, yet if we more narrowly conſider it, 'tis a ſtrong confirmation of it. For ſince vertue and goodneſs is ſo deſpicable a thing in the World; ſince holy and good Men have been always injured and perſecuted, certainly were there not an all-wiſe providence that finds out ways and means of its own to counterpoiſe theſe diſadvantages, and to preſerve them amidſt the rage and hatred of their implacable Enemies, long ere this there had been none of them left, either to have ſuffered, or complained. Were there no other argument to prove that God governs the World, this would ſuffice, even, That his Servants have been continually oppreſſed in it, yet never could be rooted

out

out of it. Though Men and Devils have combined together againſt them, and God (as they have complained) hath deemed to abandon them; yet ſuch a fenceleſs and forlorn generation as this, hath been hitherto, and ſhall ſtill be preſerved to the very end of the World. Doth not this ſpeak forth the Power and care of Almighty God, thus to keep a buſh unconſumed in the midſt of fire? to preſerve fuel untouch'd in the very embraces of flames?

Secondly, God doth chaſtiſe his own People, and proſper the wicked, that he might thereby rectifie our Judgments, and teach us not to account adverſity the greateſt Evil, nor yet proſperity the chiefeſt Good. For certainly were they ſo, only the Righteous ſhould enjoy the Grandeur, Pomp, and Glory of this World, and only the wicked and ungodly become miſerable. Concerning this, St. *Auſtin*, ſpeaks excellently in his 70th. Epiſtle, "Worldly "things, ſaith he, are in themſelves but indifferent, and good "and evil only as they are improved, but leaſt they ſhould be "thought always evil, therefore God ſometimes gives them "to thoſe who are good, and leaſt they ſhould be thought "the higheſt and the chiefeſt good, they are ſometimes given "to thoſe who are evil. And a like ſaying to this hath *Seneca*, in his Book *de provident. cap.* 5. There is no ſuch way to traduce the Riches, the Honours, the Pleaſures of this Life, thoſe vain nothings which are ſo earneſtly deſired, and eagerly purſued by the moſt, no ſuch way to beat down their price in the eſteem of all wiſe and good Men, as for God to beſtow thoſe upon the vileſt, which he ſometimes denies to the beſt and Holieſt.

Thirdly. When God beſtows any temporal good thing upon wicked and ungodly Men, he gives it as their Portion; and when he brings any calamity on his own Children, he inflicts it for their tryal. Is it not ordinary that a Servant receives more for wages, than a Son may have for the preſent at his own command? God is the

Father, and bountiful maintainer of the whole Family both in Heaven and Earth; a Father to the Faithful, a Lord and Maſter over all. He may give his Slaves large wages, when his own Children poſſibly have not ſo much in hand. Is he therefore hard or unjuſt? No: The inheritance is theirs, and that is kept in reverſion for them. What wicked Men poſſeſs of this World, is all that ever they can hope for. Why ſhould we grudge them filled bags, or ſwelling Titles! 'Tis their whole Portion. They now receive their good things. Haſt thou Food and Cloathing? That is Childrens fare: Envy not ungodly Men, who flaunt it in the Gallantry of the World. They have more than you; but 'tis all they are like to have. The Pſalmiſt gives us an account of their Eſtate, *Pſalm.* 17. 14. *They are the Men of this World, who have their Portion in this Life, whoſe bellies God filleth with his hid Treaſure*: whereas thou, O Chriſtian, who poſſeſſeſt nothing, art Heir apparent of Heaven, Coheir with Jeſus Chriſt, who is the heir of all things, and haſt an infinite Maſs of Riches laid up for thee: So great and infinite that all the Stars of Heaven are too few to account it by. You have no reaſon to complain of being kept ſhort; for all that God hath is yours: Whether Proſperity or Adverſity, Life or Death, all is yours. What God gives is for your comfort, what he denies or takes away is for your tryal; it is for the increaſe of thoſe graces which are far more gracious than any temporal enjoyment. If by ſeeing wicked and ungodly Men flow in wealth and eaſe, when thou art forced to ſtrugle againſt the inconveniencies and difficulties of a poor Eſtate, thou haſt learnt an Holy contempt and diſdain of the World, believe it God hath herein given thee more, than if he had given thee the World it ſelf.

Fourthly, God doth many times even in this World expound the myſtery of his Providence, by the fatal and dreadful overthrow of thoſe wicked Men whom he for a while ſuf-

ſuffered to proſper. *The triumph of the wicked*, ſaith, *Job*, 20. 5. *is ſhort*. At longeſt it is but ſhort, becauſe meaſured out by a ſhort Life. Now is their triumph, hereafter their torment: But many times God brings them to ruine even in this Life. He turns the Wheel of Providence and makes it paſs over thoſe who but a while before ſet vaunting a top of it. And then wilt thou doubt whether God governs the World by Providence? Wilt thou doubt whether God be juſt in ſuffering wicked Men to proſper and flouriſh? God lifts them up on high, only that he may caſt them down with the more terrible fall. When the workers of iniquity proſper (ſaith the Pſalmiſt *Pſalm.* 97. 2.) it is that they might be deſtroyed for ever. Now when God comes thus to execute Judgment upon them thoſe who queſtioned the Providence of God in their advancement, will the more glorifie it in their downfal. The Righteous ſhall ſee it and be glad, and ſhall ſay, verily there is a reward for the Righteous, verily there is a God that Judgeth in the Earth, *Pſalm* 58. 11.

Fifthly, If God doth not clear up this inequality of his providence in this Life, yet he will certainly do it at the day of Judgment. And indeed the ſtrange diſpenſation of Affairs in this World, is an Argument that doth convincingly prove that there ſhall be ſuch a day, wherein all the *Involucra* and intanglements of providence ſhall be clearly unfolded. Then ſhall the riddle be diſſolved, why God hath given this and that profane wretch ſo much Wealth, and ſo much power to do miſchief. Is it not that they might be deſtroyed for ever? Then ſhall they be called to a ſtrict account for all that plenty and proſperity for which they are now envied: and the more they have abuſed, the more dreadful will their condemnation be. Then it will appear that God gave them not as mercies, but as ſnares. 'Tis ſaid *Pſalm.* 11. 6. *That God will rain on the wicked Snares, Fire, and Brimſtone, and an horrible tempeſt.* When

he ſcaters abroad the deſireable things of this World Riches, Honours, Pleaſures, &c. then he rains ſnares upon them: and when he ſhall call them to an account for theſe things, then he will rain upon them Fire and Brimſtone, and an horrible tempeſt of his wrath and fury. *Dives* who carowſed on Earth, yet in Hell could not obtain ſo much as one poor drop of Water to cool his ſcorch'd and flaming Tongue. Had not his exceſs and intemperance been ſo great in his Life, his fiery thirſt had not been ſo tormenting after Death. And therefore in that ſad Item that *Abraham* gives him, *Luke* 16. 5. he bids him remember, that thou in thy Life time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe *Lazarus* Evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou tormented. I look upon this as a moſt bitter and a moſt deſerved Sarcaſme, upbraiding him for his groſs folly, making the trifles of this Life his good things: *Thou haſt received thy good things, but now thou art tormented.* Oh, never call *Dives*'s Purple and delicious fare good things, if they thus end in torments! Was it good for him to be wrapt in Purple, who is now wrapt in Flames? Was it good for him to fare deliciouſly, who was only thereby fatted up againſt the day of ſlaughter? Could you lay your Ears to Hell Gates, you might hear many of the Grandees and Potentates, the great and Rich ones of this World Curſing all their Pomp and Bravery, and wiſhing they had been the moſt deſpicable of all thoſe whom they once hated, oppreſs'd and injured: And as it will appear at that day that none of the enjoyments of this World are good to wicked Men; ſo that none of thoſe Afflictions and Calamities which good Men ſuffer are Evil. *Lazarus*'s Sores are not Evil, ſince now every Sore is turned into a Star. His lying proſtrate at the Rich Miſers door is not Evil, ſince now he lies in *Abraham*'s Boſom: And this day all theſe intricacies of Providence will be made plain, and we ſhall have other apprehenſions of things, than

than what we have at preſent. Now we call Proſperity, Riches, and Abundance, Good things; and Want, and Affliction, Evil. But when we come to conſider theſe with relation to Eternity, the true ſtandard to meaſure them by, then Poverty may be a Mercy, and Riches a Judgment; God may bleſs one by Afflictions, and Curſe another by Proſperity: he may beſtow more upon us in ſuffering us to want, than if he ſhould give us the ſtore and treaſures of all the Earth. And certainly whatever our thoughts of it are now, yet within awhile this will be the Judgment of us all. When we are once lodged in our Eternal State, then we ſhall acknowledge that nothing in this World deſerved the name of good, but as it promoted our eternal Happineſs, nor of evil, but as it tends to Eternal miſery.

And thus you ſee this grand Objection anſwered, and the Providence of God cleared from that unjuſtice which we are apt peeviſhly to impute unto it.

Other doubts are of leſs moment, and therefore ſhall be briefliер reſolved.

As Secondly, If God's Providence ordains all things to come to paſs according to the immutable Law of his purpoſe, then what neceſſity is there of Prayer?

We cannot by our moſt fervent Prayers alter the leaſt circumſtance, or punctilio in God's Decrees. If he hath ſo laid the method of his Providence in his own Counſels as to prepare mercies and bleſſings for us, our Prayers cannot haſten, nor maturate them before their time: Or if he determine by his Providence to bring Afflictions upon us, our Prayers cannot prevent, nor adjourn them beyond their prefixed time. Now to this *Aquinas* 2. 29. 83. *Art.* 2. Anſwers well, that the Divine Providence doth not only ordain what Effects ſhall come to paſs, but alſo by what means and cauſes, and in what order they ſhall flow. God hath appointed, as the effect it ſelf, ſo the means to accompliſh it. Now Prayer is a means to bring to paſs that which God hath determined ſhall be. We do not

Pray

Pray out of hope to alter God's Eternal purpoſes, but we Pray to obtain that which God hath ordained to be obtained by our Prayers: We ask that thereby we may be fit to receive what God hath from all Eternity determined to give by Prayer, and not otherwiſe. And therefore when we lie under any Affliction, if we languiſh under pain or ſickneſs, if we are pinch'd by Want or Poverty, if we are oppreſs'd by the injuries and perſecutions of others, Prayer is neceſſary, becauſe as God by his Providence hath brought theſe things upon us, ſo likewiſe poſſibly the ſame Providence hath determined not to remove them, till we earneſtly and fervently Pray for our deliverance from them. And therefore when God had promiſed great mercies to the *Jews*, he tells them by the Prophet *Ezek.* 36. 37. *Yet will I for this be enquired of by the Houſe of* Iſrael *to do it for them.* Prayer therefore doth not incline God to beſtow that which before he was not reſolved to give, but it capacitates us to receive that which God will not give otherwiſe.

Thirdly, Another Objection may be this. If Providence ordereth and diſpoſeth all the Occurrences of the World, then there can nothing fall out caſually and contingently.

I Anſwer. In reſpect of God it is true, there is nothing caſual nor contingent in the World. A thing may be caſual in reſpect of particular cauſes; but in reſpect of the univerſal, and firſt cauſe nothing is ſuch. If a Maſter ſhould ſend a Servant to a certain place, and command him to ſtay there till ſuch a time, and preſently after ſhould ſend another Servant to the ſame, the meeting of theſe two is wholly caſual in reſpect of themſelves, but ordained and foreſeen by the Maſter that ſent them. So is it in all fortuitous events here below: They fall out unexpectedly as to us, but not ſo as to God; he foreſees and he appoints all the viciſſitudes of things, and all the ſurpriſes of humane

mane Accidents. So that you ſee there may be contingencies in the World, though God's Providence be moſt particular and punctual.

Fourthly, Some may object that this would deſtroy the liberty of Man's will, and ſubject all things to a fatal neceſſity, even humane actions themſelves. For if Man can do nothing but what God hath by his Providence fore-appointed ſhall be done, how then is Man free either to do, or not to do?

This queſtion requires much more time to anſwer it at large than I can allow it. Some ſeeing it a very difficult thing to reconcile Providence and Liberty, have preſumed to deny that Providence intermeddles at all in ſuch affairs as depend upon the free will of Man. And of this opinion *Tully* ſeems to have been; for which St. *Auſtin* chaſtiſeth him as injurious to God; when he ſaith, *Voluntatem dum faceret liberam, fecit Sacrilegam.* I ſhall not here ſtand to diſtinguiſh of a neceſſity of Coaction, and a neceſſity of Infallibility, and that the Providence of God doth not bring upon the will a neceſſity of Coaction, but only of infallibility, which very well conſiſts with the liberty of the will. All that I ſhall at preſent anſwer, is, That God doth indeed efficaciouſly determine the will to do what it doth, yet this determination leaves it in a perfect State of liberty, becauſe the liberty of the will doth not ſo much conſiſt in indifferency to Act, or not to Act, as in a rational ſpontaneity. When we do what we have an appetite to do upon grounds that to us ſeem rational, then we Act freely. Now though God doth abſolutely ſway the will which way he pleaſeth, yet he never forceth it contrary to its own inclinations. For that to which God determines it by his Providence ſeems at that preſent moſt rational to be done: and upon that repreſentation of good in the Object, the will embraceth it and acts accordingly. So that its Providence is not violated by any boiſterous and compulſive

compulſive ſway, that the firſt cauſe hath over it, but God attracts it with ſuch a powerful and inſinuating ſweetneſs, that though the will can incline to nothing but what it ſeems to have reaſon for; yet withall it wills nothing but what God by Providence over-rules it unto. So *Auſtin De Civitate Dei*, lib. 5. Cap. 9. *Nos dicimus & Deum ſcire omnia antequam fiant, & voluntate nos facere quicquid à Nobis non niſi volentibus fieri ſentimus & novimus.* Though God foreſees and decrees all things before they are, yet we do that with a free will, which we do not otherwiſe than willingly.

Fifthly, The laſt doubt and query is this: If God govern all Actions, and all Affairs, by an exact and critical Providence; how then comes it to paſs that there is ſo much Evil, Villainy and Wickedneſs committed in it? The Diſquiſition of this is the more obſcure and intricate, becauſe it is hard to conceive how God, who is infinite goodneſs it ſelf, ſhould intereſt his Providence in what is ſo contrary to his Nature.

Now here we muſt affirm that there is no Evil whatſoever, whether it be of Sin, or of ſuffering, that comes to paſs without the Providence of God. As for the Evil of puniſhment or ſuffering, it is clear, *Amos*, 3. 6. *Shall there be Evil in the City, and the Lord hath not done it?* But for the Evil of Sin it is not effectively from God; yet doth he by his Providence, for moſt Holy and wiſe ends, permit wicked Men to commit thoſe ſins which his Law prohibits, and his nature abhorrs. Though they refuſe to be ſubject to the Written Law, yet they are and muſt be ſubject to the eternal Law of his own Councels, and there is not a ſin they commit, but as his Authority condemns, and his purity hates it; ſo his Wiſdom both ſuffers it to be, and over-rules it when it is, to his own ends. 'Tis true, all Men naturally are Slaves to their Luſts, but God holds their Chain in his own Hands; ſometimes ſlackening it by his

his permiſſion, and ſometimes ſtraitning it by his powerful reſtraint. And therefore to plead Providence the warrant of our Actions (a boiſterous argument which of late hath been moſt uſed amongſt us, until Providence it ſelf had ſignally confuted it) is to plead that for the juſtification of our Actions without which they could not be ſinful. Thus *Cain* killed his Brother by a Providence, and *Achan* Stole the Wedge of Gold, and *Judas* betrayed Chriſt, and the *Jews* Crucified him by a Providence, yea and all the Villainy that was ever acted under the Sun, was all brought forth out of the Curſed Womb of Mens Luſts, by the Providence of God, that is, by his permiſſion to the Evil, and concurrence as to the Act: neither is this any ſtain at all to the infinite Holineſs and Purity of his nature; for though we ſin, if we hinder not the Commiſſion of Sin in others when it is in our power to do it, becauſe we are commanded and obliged to it both by the care we ought to have of his Honour, and the Charity we owe unto the Souls of others; yet no ſuch obligation lies upon God, who may juſtly give Men over to their perverted inclinations. And though he can eaſily keep the moſt Wicked Man in the World, from ruſhing into thoſe Sins which he daily commits, yet not being bound to interpoſe his power to hinder them, he permits them holily, and at laſt will puniſh them juſtly.

But the queſtion is not ſo much whether God doth not by his Providence permit ſin, as why he doth it. And St. *Auſtin* anſwers it excellently in that known ſaying of his; God, ſaith he, who is infinitely good, would never permit Evil were he not alſo infinitely wiſe, and knew how to bring good out of Evil. It is the primary object of his hatred, and that alone for which he hates wicked Men. As he is an Holy God, ſo he hates it, and as he is a wiſe God, ſo he permits it. And there is a twofold good for which God doth ſometimes permit Evil.

Firſt, The manifeſtation of his own Glory.
Secondly, The exerciſe of his Peoples Graces.

Firſt, God by permitting ſin manifeſts the glory of many of his Attribute. *Surely the wrath of Man ſhall praiſe thee*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, Pſalm. 76. 10. Every Sin ſtrikes at ſome of the Divine Attributes. One denies his Juſtice, another his Mercy; one his Power, another his Wiſdom, and all are contrary to his Purity. But yet God hath in his own Councels ſuch ſecret Screws and Wiers whereby he doth ſo wreath and invert theſe Pins, that eventually they advance what they ſeem directly to oppoſe. A Child perhaps would think when he ſees an Husbandman caſt Dung and Soil upon his Field, that it were but improvidently done thus to ſpoil the flouriſhing verdure and gayety of the Graſs and Flowers. Why, that very Dung which covers them, makes them afterwards ſprout up more fair and freſh. So God permits wicked Men to Dung the Earth with their filth, that thoſe Attributes of his which ſeem to be buried under them, may afterwards ſpring up with the greater luſtre and Glory. From hence he will reap the richer crop of praiſe to himſelf. Sometimes he glorifies the ſeverity of his Juſtice, by hardening them in their Sins to their own deſtruction; ſometimes the riches of his mercy, by calling the greateſt and moſt flagitious Sinners to Repentance, and granting them Pardon; and always his infinite patience and forbearance in not executing preſent Vengeance upon thoſe who ſo daringly provoke him. But although we cannot now ſo clearly, comprehend the advantages that God makes out of the Sins of Men, yet when we come to ſtand in the general Aſſembly at the day of Judgment; God will then comment upon, and explain the myſteries of his Providence, and make us underſtand how thoſe Sins for which he will then

then condemn the World, put a gloſs and ſhine upon his Attributes.

Secondly, God by permitting ſin exerciſeth the Graces of his People. The ſins of others give us matter for the exerciſe of an Holy zeal; for God who is daily affronted by them, of an Holy Pity and Commiſeration over thoſe who like Mad-men wound, and gaſh, and deſtroy themſelves: for the exerciſe of an Holy caution over our ſelves, leaſt we be induced to ſin after their Example. Our own Sins give us daily occaſion to renew our Repentance to humble our Souls before God, to fortifie our reſolutions, to double the guards we ſet upon our own hearts and ways, to watch over our ſelves more circumſpectly, that we relapſe not into the Commiſſion of them again. Thus a true Chriſtian may gain ſome advantage by his very falls. As Husbandmen make uſe of the very Thorns and Briars that grow in their Fields to ſtop the Gaps, and ſtrengthen the fences about them, ſo ſhould we improve our very Sins and failings, to fence our Souls that we lie not open to the like temptations for the future.

Thus, you ſee that God brings good out of all the Evil which he permits, he glorifies his own Attributes, and exerciſeth his Peoples Graces. And thus you ſee likewiſe, God's Providence both Proved and Vindicated; aſſerted to be particular and punctual over all Occurrences that happen in the World, and cleared from all the Imputations of Injuſtice, that the Folly or Atheiſm of Man can lay againſt it. I ſhall conclude with two or three Inferences or Corollaries.

Firſt, If the accurateneſs of God's Providence reach unto all the little concernments of the World, we may be well aſſured, that thoſe which are the more conſiderable and important Occurrences of it, are all guided and governed by a ſpecial hand of Providence. And thus our Saviour himſelf urgeth as a ſtrong incouragement for our

confidence and truſt in God: *Not a Sparrow falls to the ground without your Father; fear not ye therefore, you are of more worth than many Sparrows.* Yea, not an Hair of your head falls without a Providence, and think ye that the head it ſelf ſhall? Certainly, God doth not like *Domitian*, buſie himſelf about Flies, and neglect the great and weighty Affairs of his Government. And this is the reaſon of that queſtion the Apoſtle Asks, 1. *Corinth.* 9. 9. *Doth God take care for Oxen:* Yes, certainly he doth, nor did the Apoſtle intend to deny it, but thereby to inferr that certainly his care is much more particular towards us. This then may eſtabliſh our hearts under any perſonal Sufferings or publick Calamities, when evil is upon our ſelves or the Nation, when Uproars and Confuſions ſeem to reduce the World back to its Ancient Chaos, when Storms and Waves over-whelm the Ship, and we with the Diſciples think our God aſleep, and begin to cry out with the Pſalmiſt, *Awake, O Lord, why ſleepeſt thou:* Our God is not ſleeping, but even then at the Helm, he Steers, he Governs and Guides all theſe Diſorders, and will conduct the whole Tumult and Hurry of Affairs to his own Glory and our Good.

Secondly, If God's Providence hath the command and ſway even over the Sins of Men, this then may be abundant matter of Peace and Satisfaction in the worſt of times, when wickedneſs doth moſt of all rage and abound; let us then conſider, that if God permits them, he alſo can when he pleaſeth Check, put a Stop and Period to their Rage and Madneſs. Their hands are Fettered by the adamantine Chains of a moſt ſtrong Decree, which they can neither reverſe nor exceed; whatſoever they do, is but by permiſſion; a limited, and a limiting Permiſſion. Our Saviour tells us, *Pilate, thou couldeſt have no power over me, except it were given thee from above.* The very power that Men have to Sin againſt God, is from God; and therefore certainly

tainly he will withdraw it, when it doth not work out his own ends. This was it that ſatisfied *David*, when *Shimei* pelted him with Stones and Curſes, 2 *Sam.* 16. 10. *Let him alone, let him Curſe, becauſe the Lord hath ſaid unto him, Curſe David.*

Thirdly, Hence ſee to what we ought to abſcribe it, that there is no more notorious wickedneſs committed in the World; when we hear of any prodigious Villainy, we are apt to wonder that ever ſuch abominations ſhould be incident to the Sons of Men. Wonder not at the matter as if any ſtrange thing were happened to them, but rather wonder at the goodneſs of God which is the ſole cauſe that ſuch things as theſe are wonders. Were his permiſſive Providence as large as Mens luſt are outragious, theſe things would ſoon ceaſe to be wonders, and become the common and ordinary practice of all Men. Why are not our Streets continually filled with Violence, Rapine, Murthers, and Out-cries? Whence is it that we enjoy our Poſſeſſion, and our Lives in Safety? The wickedneſs of Men lies hard, and preſſeth upon God's reſtraints, and whereſoever there are any gaps in it, it breaks forth naturally and violently, and if this Dam and Mound of Divine Providence, were but broken down, it would break out till it had overflowed the whole face of the Earth, and covered it with a Deluge of Impiety and Profaneneſs. But that God who ſets bounds to the raging of the Sea, and ſaith hitherto ſhall thy proud Waves come and no farther, doth by the ſame Almighty Providence, ſet bounds to the Luſts and Corruptions of Men, which are altogether as unruly, and curbs in the fury of their madneſs, which elſe would drown the whole World in Perdition and Deſtruction.

Fourthly, Laſtly, This ſhould teach us, to acquieſce and reſt ſatisfied in every Providence of God, as that which will certainly in the end redound to his own Glory. When we ſee diſorders and confuſions abroad in the World, we are apt

to

to deſpond and to cry out, Lord, what wilt thou do for thy great Name, thy Honour, thy Glory lies bleeding, and ſuffers through the Sins of Men? Why, commit thy care to God: He will certainly ſo weild their Luſts, as that they ſhall bring about and effect his own ends. God is glorifying himſelf, even by theſe things; and why then ſhould we be troubled? This thought kept alive on our hearts would cauſe us to reſt ſatisfied amidſt all the tumults we obſerve and hear of in the World. For though we know not how to unwind theſe ravelled diſpenſations to the bottom of his Glory, yet he can and will. There is an inviſible and wiſe hand that moulds and faſhions all; and though the parts by themſelves may appear rude and unpoliſh'd, yet put the whole frame and ſeries of Providence together, and that will appear moſt admirable and glorious.

Now to the King Eternal, Immortal, Inviſible, the only wiſe God, Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, be honour and glory for ever, and ever, *Amen.*

The End of the firſt Sermon.

A Diſcourſe concerning the uſe of the Holy Scriptures.

Coloſſians III. 16.

Let the word of Chriſt dwell in you richly in all Wiſdom.

THis Epiſtle, if any other, is a rich mine of Heavenly Treaſure, and abounds both in the diſcovery of Goſpel Myſteries, and the injunction of Chriſtian Duties. It is furniſht throughout with that which may either inſtruct us in Knowledge, or direct us in Practice: And the Apoſtle having already laid down many Excellent things in order to both theſe; and ſeeing it would be an endleſs task to diſcourſe unto them all the Truths, or exhort them to all the Duties of Religion in particular; he therefore ſpeaks compendiouſly in the words of my Text, and referrs them to the perfect Syſteme in which is contained an account of what a Chriſtian ought to know or do; and that is the Holy Scriptures. *Let the word of Chriſt dwell in you richly.*

The words of this Exhortation are very full and laden with weighty Sence. We may reſolve them into two parts.

Firſt, Here is the Nature and Subſtance of the Exhortation, which is to a diligent Study, and plentifull knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

Secondly

Secondly, The manner how we ought to be Converſant in them; *So that it may dwell in us richly in all Wiſdom.*

In the former, we may take notice that the Scripture is called the word of Chriſt; and that upon a double account: both becauſe he is the Author that compoſed it, and likewiſe, he is the ſubject matter of which it principally treats. Now though in both theſe reſpects, the Scriptures of the New Teſtament be more eſpecially the word of Chriſt; yet alſo may the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament as truly and properly go under his Name. For,

Firſt, He is the Author of them all: He may well write this Title upon our Bibles, *The Works of Jeſus Chriſt.* All the Prophets before his Incarnation, were but his Amanuenſes, and wrote only what he by his Spirit dictated to them, 2 *Pet.* 1. 21. *Prophecy came not in old time by the will of Man, but holy Men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*, and certainly the Holy Ghoſt inſpired them by Chriſt's Authority and Commiſſion; and what he declared, he took from him, *and ſhewed it unto them*, John 16. 14, 15. *He ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.*

Secondly, Chriſt alſo is the principal ſubject and matter of the whole Scripture. The ſending Chriſt a Saviour into the World, is that great Buſineſs which hath employed the Counſel of the Father, the Admiration and Miniſtration of Angels, the Tongues and Pens of Prophets, Apoſtles, and holy Men of all Ages, before the Scriptures were Written, when Revelation or Tradition were yet the only poſitive Rules for Faith and Practice. The Patriarchs ſaw him by theſe. *Abraham ſaw my day and was glad*, Joh. 8. 56. Afterwards the People of the Jews ſaw him by Types, Promiſes, and Prophecies recorded in the Scriptures. He was that Excellent Theme that hath filled up many Chapters of the Old Teſtament; as the firſt draught

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of a Picture repreſents the features and proportion of the Perſon, but afterwards is added the complexion and life to it. So is it here, the Pens of the Prophets drew the firſt Lineaments and Proportion of Chriſt in the Old Teſtament, and the Pens of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts have added the Life and Sweetneſs to it in the New. Yea, Chriſt is ſo truly deſcribed in the Old Teſtament, by his Life, by his Death, by all the greater Remarks of either, that in his Conteſt with the Jews, he appeals thither for a Teſtimony, *John* 5. 39. *Search the Scriptures, for they are they which teſtifie of me.* And St. *Peter*, *Acts* 3. 24. Affirms, *That all the Prophets, as many as have ſpoken, have foretold of theſe days.* And *Acts* 10. 43. *To him give all the Prophets Witneſs.* Chriſt who is the true Expoſitor, being himſelf the true Author, makes them all ſpeak his Sence. *Luke* 24. 27. *Beginning at* Moſes *and all the Prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures, the ſayings concerning himſelf.* So that St. *Chryſoſtom*'s Obſervation holds true, that the Goſpel was in the World before Chriſt. ἐῤῥιζώθη μὲν ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις τῶν προφήτων, ἐβλάστησε δὲ ἐν τῷ Κηρύγματι τῶν ἀποστόλων. It took root in the writings of the Prophets, but flowed forth in the preaching of the Apoſtles; ſo that in both theſe reſpects, the Holy Scripture may well be called the Word of Chriſt; of Chriſt as the Author, and as the Subject of it.

And in both theſe lies coucht a very cogent Argument, that may inforce this exhortation of the Apoſtle, and excite them to a diligent ſtudy of the Scriptures. For,

Firſt, Is Chriſt the Author of them, and ſhall we not with all care and diligence peruſe theſe Books which he hath Compoſed? The writings of Men are valued according to the Abilities of their Authors. If they be of approved Integrity, profound Knowledge, ſolid Judgment, their works are Eſteemed and Studied. And ſhall we not be much more Converſant in theſe, which are ſet forth by

the Author, who is truth it ſelf, and the eſſential wiſdom of the Father? Theſe that were dictated by the imediate inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, and writ as it were with a Quill of the Heavenly Dove?

Secondly, Chriſt is the ſubject of the Scriptures: And what is all other Learning and Knowledge but beggarly Elements, if compared with this? Here we have the Cabinet of God's Counſels unlockt, the Eternal purpoſes of his Grace, in ſending his Son into the World publickly declared. Here we have the Stupendous Hiſtory of God's becoming Man, of all the Miracles this God-man did upon Earth; of all the Cruelties he Suffered. Here we have the Deſcription of his Victory in his Reſurrection, of his Triumph in his Aſcention, of his Glory in his Seſſion at the right hand of the Majeſty on High. *Surely, great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs, God manifeſted in the Fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, received up into Glory,* as the Apoſtle with admiration recounts it, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. And of all theſe wounderful paſſages, the Scripture gives us a perfect Narrative. And what have the great Wits of the World ever treated on like this, either for Strangeneſs or Truth? All their Learning is but idle and contemptible Speculation, compared to this great Myſtery of a Crucified Saviour; who ſubdued Death by dying, and without force, converted the World to believe a Doctrine above Reaſon. It was a very odd ſaying of *Tertullian, de carne Chriſti cont. Marc.* and yet there is ſomething in it that ſtrikes, *Natus eſt Dei filius, non pudet, quia pudendum eſt,* the Son of God was Born, we bluſh not at it, becauſe it is ſhameful. *Mortuus eſt Dei filius, prorſus credibile eſt, quia ineptum eſt:* The Son of God dyed; it is credible, becauſe it is unfit and unlikely it ſhould be ſo: *Sepultus reſurrexit, certum eſt, quia impoſſibile eſt*; he roſe from the Dead, it is certain true, becauſe it is impoſſible. Now theſe unlikely

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and impoſſible things, judged ſo by humane Reaſon; theſe deep things of God, the Scripture declares, and declares them in ſuch a manner as convinceth even Reaſon it ſelf to aſſent to them, though it cannot comprehend them. If therefore you deſire to know Chriſt and him Crucified, and thoſe Myſterious Doctrines which the Wit of Man could not invent, for it can hardly receive them, be converſant in the Holy Scriptures; for they are the word of Chriſt, and reveals all the wonders of Wiſdom and Knowledge, to which all the Wiſdom of the World is but folly. This therefore I ſuppoſe lies in the expreſſion, the word of Chriſt, *viz.* the word of which he is both the Author, and the Subject.

Secondly, We may obſerve in the Text, the manner how we ought to be Converſant in the Scriptures, and that is ſet forth very ſignificantly.

Firſt, Let the Word of Chriſt dwell in you. Do not only give it the hearing, as a ſtrange and marvellous ſtory: let not the memory of it vaniſh out of your minds, as ſoon as the ſound of the Words vaniſheth out of your Ears, but lay it up and lodge it in your Hearts, make it familiar and Domeſtick to you; that it may be as well known to you, as thoſe that live in the ſame Houſe with you. Read it, ponder and meditate upon it, till you have tranſcribed the Bible upon your hearts, and Faithfully printed it in your memories.

Secondly, Let it dwell in you Richly or Copiouſly, which may be taken either Objectively, or Subjectively: Objectively, and ſo the ſence is, that all the word of God ſhould dwell in us. Content not your ſelves with ſome part of it; that you read the Goſpel, or New Teſtament, but neglect the Old, as is the practice of ſome fluſh Notioniſts. Or that you know the Hiſtorical part of both, but neglect the Doctrinal, which is the fond and Childiſh cuſtom of ſome, who read the Scripture as they would Romances,

mances, skipping over the moral diſcourſes as impertinent to the ſtory. But when we receive the whole Doctrine contained in it, and are diligent in revolving the Prophets, Evangeliſts, Apoſtles, every part and parcel of the Heavenly revealed truth.

Again the Word of Chriſt may dwell in us richly in the latter ſence, or Subjectively. And ſo it doth when not only every part of it dwells in us, but when it dwells alſo in every part of us. In our memories to retain, it in our minds to meditate on it, in our affections to love it, and in our Lives to practiſe it. Then doth the Word of Chriſt dwell richly, or abundantly in us.

Thirdly, Let it dwell richly in all Wiſdom.

The higheſt Wiſdom is truly to know, and to ſerve God in order to Eternal Life.

Now ſaith the Apoſtle, ſo acquaint your ſelves with the Scriptures, that you may from thence learn true Wiſdom, the ſaving knowledge both of what is to be believed, and what is to be done, in order to the obtaining of everlaſting happineſs.

To be converſant in it only, to know what it contains, is not Wiſdom but folly. But then it dwells in you in Wiſdom, when you ſtudy it, to practiſe it, when you endeavour to know the rule that ye may obey it. This is Wiſdom here, and will end in happineſs hereafter. And thus you have the words of my Text explained.

In handling this Subject, I ſhall only purſue the deſign of the Apoſtle, and endeavour to preſs thoſe exhortations upon you. And indeed I need not many Arguments to perſuade thoſe who have already any acquaintance, with theſe Sacred Oracles, ſtill to be converſant in them. Have you not your ſelves found ſuch clear light, ſuch Attractive ſweetneſs, and perſuative Eloquence in the words of God, that all that the Tongue of Man can utter for it, falls infinitely ſhort of what it ſpeaks on its own behalf? Who

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of us have not found direction from it in caſes of difficulty, Solution of doubts, ſupport under Afflictions, comfort under ſadneſs, ſtrength againſt temptation, quicknings of Grace, warmth of affection; and in brief, whatſoever we could expect from the mercy of God have we not found it in the Scriptures? And ſhall we need further to commend it to you by Arguments, ſince it hath commended it ſelf by manifold experiences? But ſo it is that the Devil knows we are diſarmed and diſabled if once he can wreſt the Sword of the Spirit from us, as the Apoſtle calls it, and therefore labours all he can to ſtrike the Bible out of our hands: Or if we do read it, he ſtrives to put on ſuch falſe Spectacles as ſhall miſrepreſent every thing to us, and poſſeſs us with prejudice and Objections againſt it. I ſhall therefore before I proceed any farther, encounter with ſome of thoſe prejudiced opinions, which make this a Claſp'd and Sealed Book to many.

Firſt, Some may fear leſt the ſtudy and knowledge of the Scriptures, ſhould only aggravate their Sin and Condemnation. On the one hand the precepts of the Law are ſo various, the duties ſo difficult, and Fleſh and Blood ſo infirm and oppoſite; that they caſt a diſpairing look at them, as impoſſible to be fulfilled. On the other hand they have been told that knowledge without practice will expoſe them to damnation without excuſe. They have read, *Ja.* 4. 17. *To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is Sin:* it is an Emphatical and weighty Sin, and *Luke*, 12. 47. *He that knew his Maſters Will, and did it not ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes.* This they have read, and this deterrs them from reading any farther. If they cannot practiſe what they know; and if to know and not practiſe, be only to inflame their laſt reckoning, and make their torments more intolerable, it is beſt for them to muffle up themſelves in a ſafe ignorance.

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To this I Anſwer.

Firſt, Though the word abounds with multitudes of ſublime precepts, and difficult duties, yet this is no diſcouragement from the ſtudy of it. For conſider that this ſame word is not only a light to diſcover what you ought to do, but an help to inable you to do it. It is the very means that God appointed to overcome your averſeneſs, and aſſiſt your weakneſs. And if ever this be effected, it muſt in an ordinary way, be by converſing with the Scriptures. That Sick Man hath loſt his Reaſon, as well as his Health, who ſhould refuſe to take Phyſick, becauſe if it doth not work, it will but make him the worſe. Why the way to make it work is by taking it. So it is a diſtempered kind of arguing, againſt the word of God, the Phyſick of our Souls, that it is mortal and deadly if it doth not work into practice. The way to make it work into practice, is to take it firſt into our knowledge; 'tis true, it were a great diſcouragement if the Scripture only ſhewed you how much work you have to do, what Temptations to reſiſt, what Corruptions to mortifie, what Graces to exerciſe, what duties to perform, and left all that upon your own hands. But the Leaves of the Bible, are the Leaves of the Tree of Life, as well as of the Tree of Knowledge; they ſtrengthen as well as inlighten, and have not only a Commanding, but an aſſiſting Office. And this the Scripture doth two ways.

Firſt, It directs where we may receive ſupplies of ability for the performance of whatſoever it requires. It leads thee unto Chriſt, who is able to furniſh thee with ſupernatural ſtrength, for ſupernatural duties. His treaſury ſtands open for all concerns; and his Almighty Power ſtands ingaged to aſſiſt thoſe who relie upon it. Be not diſcouraged therefore, he that finds us work, finds us ſtrength: and the ſame Scripture that injoyns us obedience, exhibits God's promiſe of beſtowing upon us the power of obeying. *Thou who workeſt all works in us and for us, Iſaiah, 26.* 12. *And,*

12. *And work out your own Salvation*, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, *Phil.* 2. 12, 13. Why then ſhould we ſo complain of hard ſayings, and Grevious Commandments? Have we not God's Omnipotence obliged by promiſe to aſſiſt in the ſame words, wherein we are commanded to obey? What ſaith the Apoſtle, *I am able to do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening me*, Phil. 4. 13. When in reading the Scripture, thou meeteſt with difficult and rigorous Duties, the ſeverity of Mortification, the ſelf-cruelty of plucking out right Eyes, and cutting off right Hands; commend they ſelf to theſe promiſes of aid and aſſiſtance, that the ſame Scripture holds forth, and lift up thy heart in that divine Meditation of St. *Auguſtine*, *Lord, give what thou Commandeſt, and command what thou pleaſeſt.* Whilſt thou thus duly dependeſt on Chriſt's ſtrength, and makeſt uſe of thine own, it is as much his Honour and Office to inable thee, as it is thy Duty to perform what he requires.

Secondly, The Scripture as it directs us to rely on the ſtrength of Chriſt; ſo it is a means that God hath appointed to quicken and excite our own ſtrength and Power, to the diſcharge of thoſe Duties it Diſcovers. Wherefore are thoſe preſſing Exhortations, and thoſe dreadfull Threatnings, every where ſo diſperſed up and down in the Book of God, but that when we are ſlow and dull and drowſie, the Spirit may by theſe, as by ſo many goads, rowze us, and make us ſtart into Duty? Such a ſpiritual ſloath hath benumb'd us, that without this quickening, we ſhould not be diligent in the Work of the Lord, and therefore *David* prays, *Pſalm.* 119. 88. *Quicken me, ſo ſhall I keep the Teſtimonies of thy Mouth*, but yet it is alſo the word it ſelf that quickens us to the Obedience of the word, *Pſal.* 119. 50. *Thy word hath quickened me.* And indeed, if you can come from reading the word, that ſo abounds with Promiſes, with Threatnings, with rational

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Arguments, with pathetick Expoſtulations, winning Inſinuations, importunate Intreaties, heroick Examples propounded to our Imitation, with all the perſwaſive Art and Rhetorick that becometh the Majeſty of the great God to uſe; if you can read this word, and yet find from it no warmth of Affection, no quickening to Duty; let me tell you, you either read it without attending to it, or elſe attend without believing it. It is therefore no diſcouragement from ſearching and ſtudying the Scriptures, that its commands be many and difficult, for it directs you whither to go for promiſed ſtrength, and the more you converſe with it, the more will you find your hearts quickened to a due Obedience of it. That's the firſt Anſwer.

But then ſecondly, Whereas many think that it is better not to know, than not to practiſe; we muſt here diſtinguiſh of Ignorance, which is of too kinds, either invincible, or elſe affected: Invincible ignorance is ſuch as is conjoyned with, and proceeds from an utter impoſſibility of right information, and it ariſeth only from two things.

Firſt, Abſolute want of neceſſary Inſtruction: or,

Secondly, Want of natural capacity to receive it.

Affected Ignorance, is an ignorance under the means of Knowledge, and always ariſeth from the neglect, or contempt of them. Such is the ignorance of thoſe who do, or may live where the Goſpel is preached, and where by pains and induſtry they may arrive to the knowledge of the truth.

Now here for ever to anſwer this Objection, and to ſhew you how neceſſary knowledge is, I ſhall lay down theſe two particulars.

Firſt, I grant indeed, that unpractis'd knowledge is a far greater ſin than invincible Ignorance, and expoſeth to a much ſorer Condemnation. Hell Fire burns with Rage, and meets with fuel fully prepared for it, when God dooms

dooms unto it an head full of Light, and an heart full of Luſts. Thoſe who know God's will, but do it not, do but carry a torch with them to Hell, to fire that Pile that muſt for ever burn them. We have a common Proverb, That knowledge is no Burthen: But believe it, if your knowledge in the Scripture be merely Speculative, and overborn by the violence of unruly Luſts; this whole Word will be no otherwiſe to you, than the burthen of the Law, as the Prophets ſpeak, a Burthen that will lie inſupportably heavy upon you for ever. Better far you were born under Barbariſm in ſome dark Corner of the Earth, where the leaſt gleame of Goſpel-light never ſhone, and where the name of Chriſt was never mentioned, than to have this weighty Book, a Book which you have read and known, hung about you to ſink you infinitly deeper in the Burning Lake, than a Mill-ſtone hung about you can do in the midſt of the Sea. What St. *Peter* ſpeaks of Apoſtates, 2 *Pet.* 2. 21. is but too well applicable to the knowing Sinner. *It had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteouſneſs, than after they have known it, to turn aſide from the Commandments delivered to them.* How? Better not to have known it? Why, is there any poſſibility to eſcape the Condemnation of Hell without the knowledge of the way of Righteouſneſs revealed in the Scriptures? No, Damnation had been unavoidable without this knowledge; yet it had been better they had not known it. For here is the Hyperbole of their Miſery; better they had been Damned than to have known theſe Truths, and this rule of Righteouſneſs, and yet turn from the Obedience and practice of it. O fearful ſtate! O dreadful doom! when a ſimple and genuine damnation ſhall be reckoned a gain and favour in compariſon of that exquiſite one which God will with all his Wiſdom prepare, and all his power inflict on thoſe who knowing the righteous Judgment of God, *that they who commit ſuch things are worthy of*

Death, do notwithſtanding, perſevere in them, *He that knew his Maſters will and did it not, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes*, *Luke* 12. 47. And, *if I had not come and ſpoken unto them, they had not had Sin, but now they have no Cloak for their Sins*, ſaith our Saviour, *John*, 15. 22. The Sin and puniſhment of thoſe who are invincibly ignorant, is as nothing compared to what the knowing Sinners lie under.

But do not flatter your ſelves, your ignorance is not invincible. Are you not called to the knowledge of Chriſt? Do you not read or hear the Scriptures? Do you not enjoy Goſpel Ordinances and Miniſtry? May you not, if you will be but diligent and induſtrious, underſtand what you are ignorant of? Certainly there is nothing that can prove your ignorance invincible, unleſs it be your obſtinacy, that you will not be prevailed with to be inſtructed by all the means of Inſtruction. Your Ignorance muſt therefore be affected. Well then attend unto

The ſecond particular. Affected Ignorance is a greater Sin, and will be more ſorely puniſhed at the day of Judgment, than unpractiſed knowledge. This kind of ignorance is ſo far from being pleadable as an excuſe, that it is an aggravation of Mens guilt, and will be ſo of their Condemnation. There be but two things that compleat a Chriſtian, Knowledge and Practice. Both theſe God doth ſtrictly require. Knowledge may be without practice, but the practice of Godlineſs cannot be without knowledge. God, I ſay, requires them both. Now Judge ye which is the greater Sinner, he that labours after knowledge, though he neglect practice, or he that neglects them both: He that fulfills ſome part of God's will, or he that fulfills nothing of it. Certainly in your own Judgment, this latter deſerves to be doubly puniſh'd; once for not doing his duty, and again for not knowing it when he might. Truly it is but juſt, and righteous that God ſhould with

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the higheſt diſdain and indignation, ſay unto them, Depart from me, ye Curſed, I know you not, ſince they have audaciouſly ſaid unto him, Depart from us, we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways. The Apoſtle, ſpeaking of God's patience towards Heathens, who were invincibly ignorant of the truth, tells us, *Acts* 17. 30. *That the times of this ignorance* (and yet an ignorance it was that put them upon no leſs than brutiſh Idolatry) *God winked at.* Ignorant perſons, in ignorant times, whileſt as yet the World was deſtitute of the means of knowledge, and darkneſs over-ſpread the face of it, God connived and winked at. But ignorant perſons in knowing times, God doth not wink at but frown upon. I am the more earneſt in preſſing this, becauſe I perceive that vile and rotten principle, unworthy of a Chriſtian who is a Child of light and of the day, is taken up by many, That it is no matter how little we know, if we do but practiſe what we know. What a cheat hath the Devil put upon them! Hath not God commanded you to know more, as well as to practiſe what you know? Is it likely you ſhould practiſe what you know upon God's command, who will not upon his command increaſe your knowledge? And yet this is the uſual Plea of profane Men. Ask them why they frequent the publick Ordinances ſo ſeldom, they will tell you, they know more by one Sermon, than they can practiſe. But how can ſuch make Conſcience of practiſing, who make none of knowing, though the ſame God hath enjoined them both? Yea, though they cannot practiſe what they know, yet let me tell them, that for thoſe who live under the means of Grace, and may be inſtructed if they will, it may be as great a Sin to omit a duty out of neglect of knowing it, as out of neglect of doing it; yea and much greater. We ſhould our ſelves Judge that Servant, who while we are ſpeaking to him, ſtops his Ears on purpoſe that he might not hear what we command him; we ſhould, I ſay, Judge

him worthy of more ſtripes, than he who gives diligent ear to our commands, although he will not obey them. So it is in this Caſe. Thou who ſtoppeſt thine Ears, and will not ſo much as hear what the will of thy Lord and Maſter is, deſerveſt much more puniſhment, than he who takes pains to know it, although he doth it not. It is damnable not to give God the ſervice that he requires. But O Inſolence! not to give God thy Lord and Maſter ſo much as the hearing? Hath God ſent Man into the World, and ſent the Scriptures after, as Letters of inſtruction, what we ſhould do for him here, and will it think'ſt thou be a ſufficient excuſe when thou returneſt to thy Lord, that it is true thou hadſt inſtructions, but never open'd'ſt them, never look'd'ſt into them? What a fearful contempt is this caſt upon the great God, never ſo much as to enquire what his will is? Whether or no he commands that which is fit and reaſonable for us to perform? And therefore refuſe not to ſearch and ſtudy the Scriptures, upon pretence that the knowledge of what you cannot fulfill, will but aggravate your Sin and Condemnation. For be aſſured of it, greater Sin, and ſorer Condemnation can no Man have, than he who neglects the means of knowledge, thereby to diſoblige himſelf from practice. And again the Scriptures were given to aſſiſt us in the performance of thoſe duties which it requires from us. They do not only inform the judgment, but quicken the will and affections, and ſtrengthen the whole Soul to its duty. And this is in anſwer to the firſt Objection.

Secondly, Some will ſay the reading of the Scriptures poſſeſſeth them with ſtrange fears, and fills them with incredible terrors. It raiſeth up ſuch dreadful Apparitions of Hell, and the wrath of God, as makes them a terror to themſelves.

To this I Anſwer, Firſt, It may be thy condition is ſuch as requires it. Poſſibly thou art in a ſtate of wrath, and would'ſt

would'ſt thou not be under the apprehenſions of it? Thou art under the guilt of thy Sins, and then no wonder that the voice of God ſhould be terrible unto thee. It is moſt unreaſonable to hate the word, as *Ahab* hated *Micaiah*, becauſe it propheſieth no good concerning thee. Alas! What good can it ſpeak, as long as thou thy ſelf continueſt Evil?

Secondly, It is not ſo much the Scripture, as thine own evil Conſcience that haunts and terrifies thee. When thou readeſt that dreadful Threatning, *Ezek.* 18. 4. *The Soul that ſinneth it ſhall die*, there were nothing of terror in it, did not thy guilty Conſcience witneſs againſt thee, that thou art the Man: 'Tis this that turns and levels all God's Artillery againſt thee. Get therefore a Conſcience pacified upon good Grounds, and the very threatning of the Word will ſpeak to thee, not ſo much terror from the dreadfulneſs of the Wrath, and Condemnation denounced, as Joy, that thou haſt eſcaped it.

Thirdly, It may be, the Word of God by working in thee, the Spirit of fear, is preparing thee for the Spirit of Adoption; for that uſually uſhers in this. We find the Gaoler trembling, before we find him rejoycing: There were mighty and rending Winds, Earth-quakes, and Fire, all Terrible; before theſe came *the ſtill voice*, in which God was, 1 *Kings* 19.12. So God in Convictions many times prepares the way by Thunders, and Earth-quakes, by the Thundering of his Word, and the Trembling of our own Conſciences, before he comes to us in the ſtill and ſweet voice of Peace and Comfort. And certainly they are much more afraid than hurt, whom God by his Terrours thus frights into Heaven.

But, Thirdly, Some may ſtill ſay, their Fears are ſo ſtrong that they will drive them into Deſperation, or Diſtraction, if they longer pore on thoſe dreadful things, the Scripture contains.

I anſwer,

I anſwer, there is not one line or ſyllable in the whole Book of God that gives the leaſt ground for Deſpair. Nay, there are the moſt ſupporting Comforts a poor Fearful Trembling Soul can deſire; *Come unto me all that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.* *Come unto me and I will in no wiſe caſt you out, return unto the Lord and he will abundantly Pardon,* Iſaiah 55. 7. *I, even I, am he that blots out and forgets your Sins*; and innumerable ſuch like. Now if Men will only take the Sword of the Spirit to wound them, and not alſo the Balm of the Spirit to heal them, they may through their own fault, eſpecially when they read the Scriptures with the Devil's Commentaries, fret themſelves into Deſpair.

Fourthly, Some may ſay, certainly it cannot be thus neceſſary that the word of Chriſt ſhould dwell thus richly and abundantly in all Chriſtians. It is requiſite indeed for Miniſters, whoſe calling it is to Teach and Inſtruct others, that they ſhould have this abundance of Scripture dwelling in them; but for us who are to receive the Law at their Mouth, a competent knowledge in the Fundamentals of Religion may well be ſufficient. We know that Chriſt is the Son of God, that he came into the World to ſave Sinners, and that if we would be ſaved by him, we muſt believe in him, and ſuch chief points of Chriſtianity which are ſufficient to Salvation.

To this I anſwer, Firſt, God may well expect a more plentiful meaſure of the Word to dwell in Miniſters; becauſe it is not only their General, but particular calling to peruſe and ſtudy it. There is therefore a twofold fullneſs, a fullneſs of the private Chriſtian, and a fullneſs of the treaſurer or ſteward, to whoſe charge the Oracles of God are committed, and who is to communicate Knowledge to the People. This being the Miniſter's Office, it is his Duty eſpecially to abound and be inriched in the knowledge of the Scripture.

But

But Secondly, Wherefore muſt the word of Chriſt dwell ſo richly in Miniſters, is it for themſelves only, or is it to inſtruct their Flock? What? And can it be neceſſary for them to Teach, and yet unneceſſary for you to Learn? Are they bound to ſearch into the depth of Goſpel Myſteries to inform you of them, and is it enough for you only to know the firſt Principles and Rudiments? Certainly, whatſoever God requires the Miniſter to Teach, that he requires you to Learn. Now would you your ſelves Judge the Miniſter to have ſufficiently diſcharged his Duty, that ſhould only in the general preach, that we are all Sinners; that Chriſt the Son of God came into the World to ſave us, that the Glory of Heaven, and the Torments of Hell, ſhall be the rewards of Obedience, or Diſobedience? If theſe few abſolutely neceſſary and fundamental Truths were all, you might well think the Miniſtry to be a very eaſie, or a very needleſs Office.

If then it is our Duty to reveal to you the whole Counſel of God, and to withhold nothing from you of all thoſe Myſteries which the Scripture contains, whereof ſome give Life, others Light, ſome are Vital, others Ornamental; you cannot with Reaſon but conclude, that if we are obliged to Teach theſe things, you alſo are obliged to learn and know them.

Thirdly, It is a moſt deſtructive Principle that many have through Sloath and Lazineſs taken up, That a little knowledge will ſuffice to bring them to Heaven. Certainly God would never have revealed ſo many deep and profound Myſteries in his Word, if it were not neceſſary they ſhould be known and believed. Shall we think all the reſt of the Bible ſuperfluous, except a few plain practical Texts? What God hath recorded in the Scripture, is written for our Inſtruction. 'Tis true if we have not the means of inſtruction, nor are in a poſſibility of attaining it, a leſs meaſure of knowledge, anſwered by a Conſcientious practice

ctice may ſuffice for our Salvation. But for us we have line upon line, and precept upon precept, for us to ſatisfie our ſelves with a few of the common Principles, ſlighting the reſt as nice and unneceſſary points, for us to neglect knowledge, argues defect of Grace. For whereſoever true Grace is, there will be a moſt earneſt endeavour to grow daily in both; and yet multitudes every where, even of thoſe who abhorr groſſer Sins, as Swearing, Drunkenneſs and the like, yet take up with a few Notions of Religion that all are Sinners and all muſt periſh, unleſs Chriſt ſave them, &c. This they knew, as ſoon as they knew any thing; and more than this, they will not know: They will not trouble their heads with any farther diſcoveries, nor look deep into the Myſteries of Godlineſs; contenting themſelves that they have, as they think, knowledge enough to bring them to Heaven. Let me tell them, that though where there is not means of knowledge, a little may ſuffice for Salvation; yet where God doth afford plentiful means, the knowledge of theſe very things becomes neceſſary to them, which others might ſafely be ignorant of. This is in anſwer to the *4th.* Objection.

Fifthly, Some may object that they have found by Experience, that the ſtudy of Scripture hath many times made them the worſe, it hath alarmed their Luſts, and put them in an Uproar. Such and ſuch Suits were quiet, till they read in the Word a command againſt them; therefore they are diſcouraged and think it beſt to forbear the ſtudy of the Scripture, ſince they find that by forbidding Sin, it only rowſeth and awakens it.

Firſt, I anſwer, Firſt this was St. *Paul's* very Caſe, *Rom.* 7. 8. *Sin taking occaſion by the Command, wrought in me all manner of Concupiſcence*; now this effect is merely accidental, and is not to be imputed unto the Holy Word of God, but to the wicked Heart of Man, which takes an hint (ſo deſperately corrupt is it) from God's forbidding

forbidding Sin, to put it ſelf in Mind of committing it.

Secondly, Thou complaineſt that the Word exciteth to Corruptions, but it doth it no otherwiſe than the Sun draws Smoak, and ſtink out of a Dunghill. It doth increaſe but unhappily excite them. The very ſame Luſts lay hid in their Hearts before. There they lay like ſo many Vipers and Serpents aſleep till the Light and Warmth of the Word makes them ſtir and crawl about. And this Advantage thou mayeſt make of it, that when thy Corruptions ſwarm thick about thee, upon the diſturbance the Law of God hath made among them, thou mayeſt thence ſee what a wicked Heart and Nature thou haſt, how much Filth and Mud there lyeth at the bottom of it, which preſently riſeth upon the firſt ſtirring. This may make thee vile in thine own Eyes, and deeply humbled under the ſad and ſerious Conſideration of thy indwelling Sin. 'Tis the very uſe the Apoſtle makes in the ſame Caſe. *Rom.* 7. 24. *O wretched Man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death!* When Humors are in Motion, we ſoon perceive what is the ſtate of our Body, and when Corruptions are once ſtirred, we may thereby eaſily know the State and Condition of our Souls.

Thirdly, The ſame Word that doth thus occaſionally ſtir up Sin, is the beſt means to beat it down. You may perceive by this, there is ſomewhat in the Word that is extreamly contrary to their Sins, ſince they do ſo riſe and arm againſt it, their great Enemy is upon them, and this alarm that they take, is but before their overthrow. It may be the Mud is only ſtirred that it might be caſt out, and their Hearts cleanſed from it. Be not diſcouraged therefore, for there is no Means in the World ſo appoſite to the deſtruction and ſubduing of Sin as the Scripture, though at firſt it may ſeem inſtead of ſubduing of Sins to ſtrengthen them.

Sixthly, Many are diſcouraged from ſtudying the Scriptures, becauſe their Memories are ſo treacherous and unfaithfull they can retain nothing; when they have read the Scripture, and would recollect what they have read, they can give no account of it either to themſelves or others. Nothing abides upon them, and therefore they think it were as good give over as thus continually pour Water into a Sieve, and inculcate Truths upon ſuch a leaky Memory, where all runs out. This is indeed the Complaint of many. But,

Firſt, This ſhould put thee on a more frequent and diligent ſtudy of the Scripture than diſcourage thee from it. More pains will ſupply this Defect, thou muſt the oftner prompt, and the oftner examine thy Self, the more forgetful thou art. Memory is the Soul's Steward, and if thou findeſt it unfaithful, call it the oftner to account. Be ſtill following it with Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept, and continually inſtill ſomewhat into it. A Veſſel ſet under the fall of a Spring, cannot leak faſter than it is ſupplyed. A conſtant dropping of this Heavenly Doctrine into the Memory, will keep it that though it be leaky, yet it never ſhall be empty.

Secondly, Scripture Truths, when they do not inrich the Memory, yet they may purifie the Heart. We muſt not meaſure the Benefit we receive from the Word according to what of it remains, but according to what effect it leaves behind. Lightning you know than which nothing ſooner vaniſheth away, yet it often breaks and melts the hardeſt and moſt firm Bodies in its ſudden Paſſage. Such is the irreſiſtable force of the Word; the Spirit often darts it through us; it ſeems but like a flaſh and gone, and yet it may break and melt down our hard Hearts before it, when it leaves no impreſſion at all upon our Memories. I have heard of one who returning from an affecting Sermon highly commended it to ſome, and being demanded what

what he remembred of it, anſwered, truly I remember nothing at all, but only while I heard it, it made me reſolve to live better than ever I have done, and ſo by God's Grace I will. Here was now a Sermon loſt to the Memory, but not to the Affections. To the ſame Purpoſe, I have ſomewhere read a ſtory of one that complained to an aged Holy-Man, that he was much diſcouraged from reading the Scripture, becauſe his Memory was ſo ſlippery he could faſten nothing upon it that he read. The old Hermet (for ſo as I remember he was deſcribed) bid him take an earthen Pitcher and fill it with Water; when he had done it, he bid him empty it again, and wipe it clean that nothing ſhould remain in it, which when the other had done, and wondred to what this tended; now ſaith he, though there be nothing of the Water remaining to it, yet the Pitcher is cleaner than it was before; ſo though thy Memory retain nothing of the word thou readeſt, yet thy Heart is the cleaner for its very paſſage through.

Thirdly, Never fear your Memory, only pray for good and pious Affections. Affection to the truths we read or hear, makes the Memory retentive of them. Moſt Mens Memories are like Jett, or Electrical Bodies, that attract and hold-faſt only ſtraws or Feathers, or ſuch vain and light things; diſcourſe to them the Affairs of the World, or ſome idle and romantick ſtory, their Memories retain this as faithfully as if it were ingraven on leaves of Braſs. Whereas the great important truths of the Goſpel, the great Myſteries of Heaven, and concernments of Eternity, leave no more impreſſion upon them, than words on the Air in which they are ſpoken; whence is this, but only that the one ſort work themſelves into the Memory through the intereſt they have got in the Affections which the other cannot do. Had we but the ſame delight in Heavenly Objects, did we but receive the Truth in the love of it, and mingle it with Faith in the hearing, this would fix that

Volatileneſs and Flittineſs of our Memories, and make every truth as indelible, as it is neceſſary. That's in Anſwer to the 6th. Objection.

Seventhly, others complain that the Scripture is obſcure and difficult to be underſtood; they may as well, and with as good ſucceſs, attempt to ſpie out what lies at the Centre of the Earth, as ſearch into the deep and hidden Myſteries, which no humane underſtanding can fathom or comprehend. And this diſcourageth them.

To this I anſwer First, 'tis no wonder if there be ſuch profound depths in the word of God, ſince it is a Syſtem and Compendium of his Infinite and unſearchable Wiſdom, that Wiſdom which from the beginning of the World hath been hid in God. Thoſe deep Truths which your underſtanding cannot reach, require your humble Veneration.

Secondly, The Scripture is ſuited to every Capacity. It is (as it is commonly expreſt) a Ford wherein a Lamb may wade, and an Elephant ſwim; and herein is the infinite Wiſdom of God ſeen, in wreathing together plain Truths with obſcure, that he might gain the more Credit to his Word, by the one inſtructing the ignorance of the weakeſt, by the other puzling and confounding the underſtanding of the wiſeſt. This alſo adds a Beauty and Ornament to the Scripture.

As the Beauty of the World is ſet off by a gracefull variety of Hills and Valleys, ſo is it in the Scripture. There are ſublime Truths, that the moſt aſpiring reaſon of Man cannot over-top, and there are more plain and eaſie Truths in which the weakeſt Capacity may converſe with Delight and Satisfaction. No Man is offended with his Garden, for having a ſhady thicket in it, no more ſhould we be offended with the word of God, that among ſo many fair and open Walks, we here and there meet with a Thicket that the Eye of Humane Reaſon cannot look through.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Thoſe Truths that are abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, are as plainly without either Obſcurity or Ambiguity recorded in the Scripture as if they were (as the *Mahumetans* think concerning their *Alcoran*) written with Ink made of Light, there's the neceſſity of Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, of repentance for dead works, of an holy and mortified Life, ſo clearly ſet down, that ſcarce have there any been found ſo impudent as to raiſe Controverſies about them, and is it not peeviſh to quarrel at the word for being obſcure in thoſe things, which if thou haſt uſed thy utmoſt Diligence to underſtand, the ignorance of them ſhall not at all prejudice thy Salvation? Bleſs God, rather that he hath ſo clearly revealed the neceſſary and practical Duties of a Chriſtian Life, that thoſe are not involved in any myſtical or obſcure Intimations, but thou mayſt without doubt or diſpute, know what is of abſolute neceſſity to be either believed or practiſed in order to Salvation. Be aſſured of this, that what with all thy Labour and Diligence thou canſt not underſtand thou needeſt not, and what is needful, is plain and obvious, and thou mayeſt eaſily underſtand it.

Fourthly, the Scripture is obſcure, but hath not God offered us ſufficient helps for the unfolding of it? Have you not the promiſe of his Spirit to illuminate you? 1 *Cor.* 2. 10. *God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit, for the Spirit ſearcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.* Have we not his Miniſter, whoſe Office it is to inſtruct us, and lead us into the inmoſt Sence of the Scriptures? Nay, have we not the Scripture it ſelf, which is the beſt interpreter of its own meaning; uſually if it ſpeak more darkly in one place, it ſpeaks the ſame truth more clearly in another. Now compare Scripture with Scripture, you will find it holds a Light unto its ſelf. The oftner you read, and the more you ponder on thoſe paſſages that are abſtruſe, the more you will find them clear up to your underſtanding. So that neither is this any reaſonable diſcourgement from ſtudying the Holy Scriptures. Eighthly,

Eighthly, Others may ſay, they are doubtful, becauſe they ſee many of thoſe who have been moſt Converſant in the Scripture, how they have been perverted and carried aſide into damnable Errors, and yet ſtill have pleaded Scripture for the defence of them.

I anſwer, True, the Devil hath in theſe our days buſied himſelf to bring a reproach upon Scripture, through the whimſies and giddineſs of thoſe who have pretended moſt acquaintance in it. But let not this be any diſcouragement, for this ariſeth not directly from the influence the Scripture hath on them, which is the rule of truth only; but from the pride and ſelf conceit of a few Notioniſts, who wreſt it to their own Perdition. And though they boaſt much of Scripture to countenance their Opinions; yet Scripture miſunderſtood and miſapplyed is not Scripture. Indeed there is no other way to diſcern truth from Error, but only by the Scripture rightly underſtood, and there is no way rightly to underſtand it, but diligently to ſearch it.

But to ſay that therefore we muſt not read the Scripture becauſe ſome wreſt it to their own Deſtruction, is alike reaſonable, as to ſay that therefore we muſt not Eat nor Drink, becauſe that ſome eat to Glutony, and others drink to Giddineſs and Madneſs. The Apoſtle St. *Peter* tells us, *Epiſt.* 1 *Chap.* 3. v. 16. that in St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles there were ſome things hard to be underſtood, which the unlearned and unſtable wreſt, as they do alſo the other Sriptures, to their own deſtruction. Shall we therefore conclude, that neither his Epiſtle nor any other of the Scriptures ſhould be read by us; becauſe that in ſome, inſtead of Nouriſhment, they have occaſioned onely Wind, Flatulency and ill humours? If this had been his purpoſe, it had certainly been very eaſie for him to have ſaid, Becauſe they are hard to be underſtood, and many wreſt them to their own deſtruction, therefore beware that you read them

them not. But in ſtead of this, he draws another inference, *verſe* 17. *Ye therefore beloved, beware, leaſt ye alſo being led away with the Errors of the Wicked fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs, but grow in grace and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* He ſaith not, beware that you read them not, but, beware how you read them: This is the true Apoſtolical Caution, which tends not to drive us from the Scriptures, but to make us more ſtudious and inquiſitive in them, leaſt we alſo be perverted by the cunning craftineſs of Men, who lie in wait to deceive. And this the Primitive Parents thought the beſt and ſureſt means, to preſerve their People from Error and Seduction. It were almoſt endleſs to recite to you thoſe many paſſages wherein they do moſt Pathetically exhort all, of all Ranks and Conditions, of each Sex, of all Ages, to a diligent peruſal of the Holy Scriptures. And ſo far were they from taking it up in a Language unknown to the Vulgar, or debarring the Laity from Reading it, that the Tranſlations of it into the common Tongue of each Country were Numerous, and their Exhortations ſcarce more vehement and earneſt in any thing, than that the People would employ their time and thoughts in revolving them. It is therefore a moſt certain ſign, that that Church hath falſe wares to put off, which is of nothing more careful than to darken the Shop. And aſſuredly the wreſting the Scriptures by ſome who read them, cannot occaſion the Deſtruction of more, than that damnable Idolatry, and thoſe damnable Hereſies have done, which have been brought into, and are generally owned and practiſed by the Church of *Rome*, through the not reading of them.

Thus you ſee (as it was in *Joſiah*'s time) how much duſt and Rubbiſh this Book of the Law lies under. I have endeavoured to remove it. And ſhall now proceed to thoſe Arguments, that may perſuade you to a diligent ſearch and peruſal of the Scriptures. The *Jews* indeed were

were ſo exact, or rather Superſtitious in this, that he was judged a deſpiſer of thoſe Sacred Oracles, who did not readily know how often every Letter of the Alphabet occurred in them. This preciſeneſs God hath made uſe of to deliver down his word to us, unvaried and uncorrupted. It is not ſuch a ſcrupulous ſearch of the Scripture, I now exhort you to: but as God hath left it to us a rich Depoſitum, a dear pledge of his Love and care, ſo we ſhould diligently attend to a rational and profitable ſtudy of it.

There are but two things in the general that commend any writing to us, either that it diſcovers knowledge, or directs practice; that it informs the Judgment, or reforms the Life. Both of theſe are eminently the Characters of this Book of God. And therefore *David* tells us, *Pſal.* 19. 7. *The Law of God converts the Soul, and makes wiſe the ſimple.* It is a light not only to our heads, but it *is a Lamp unto our Feet, and a light unto our paths, Pſal.* 119. 105. Let us conſider it as to both.

Firſt, In point of knowledge, as it perfects the underſtanding, and ſo it will appear in ſundry particulars how excellent a ſtudy it is. For

Firſt, The Scripture diſcovers unto us the knowledge of thoſe truths that the moſt improved natural Reaſon could never ſift out; and are intelligible only by Divine Revelation. God hath Compoſed two Books, by the diligent ſtudy of which, we may come to the knowledge of himſelf. The Book of the Creatures, and the Book of the Scriptures. The Book of the Creatures is written in thoſe great Letters of Heaven and Earth, the Air and Sea, and by theſe we may ſpell out ſomewhat of God. He made them for our inſtruction, as well as our ſervice. There is not a Creature that God hath breathed abroad upon the face of the Earth, but it Reads us Lectures, of his infinite Power and Wiſdom. So that it is no abſurdity to ſay that they are

all

all the Works of his mouth ſo they are all the works of his Hands. The whole World is a ſpeaking workmanſhip, *Rom.* 1. 20. *The inviſible things of God, are clearly ſeen by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead.* And indeed when we ſeriouſly conſider how God hath poiſed the Earth in the midſt of the Air, and the whole World in the midſt of a vaſt and boundleſs nothing; how he hath hung out thoſe glorious lights of Heaven, the Sun, the Moon, and Stars, and made paths in the Sky for their ſeveral courſes, how he hath laid the Sea on heaps, and ſo girt it in, that it may poſſibly overlook, but not overflow the Land, when we view the Variety, Harmony, and Law of the Creation, our Reaſon muſt needs be very ſhort, if we cannot from theſe collect the infinite Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs of the Creator. So much of God as belong to theſe two great Attributes of Creator and Governour of the World, the Book of Nature may plainly diſcover to us. But then there are other more retired, and reſerved Notions of God, other truths that nearly concern our ſelves and our eternal Salvation to know and believe, which nature could never give the leaſt glimpſe to diſcover. What Signature is there ſtampt upon any of the Creatures of a Trinity in Unity, of the eternal Generation, or temporal Carnation of the Son of God? What Creature could inform us of our firſt fall, and guilt contracted by it? Where can we find the Copy of the Covenant of Works, or of grace printed upon any of the Creatures? All the great Sages of the World, though they were Nature's Secretaries, and ranſack'd its abſtruſeſt myſteries, yet all their Learning and Knowledge, could not diſcover the Sacred Myſtery of a Crucified Saviour. Theſe are truths which Nature is ſo far from ſearching out, that it can ſcarce receive them when revealed. 1. *Corinth.* 2. 14. *The natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of*

God, neither can he know them, becauſe they are Spiritually diſcerned. The light that can reveal theſe, muſt break immediately from Heaven it ſelf. And ſo it did upon the Prophets, Evangeliſts, and Apoſtles; the Pen-men of the Holy Scriptures.

And if it were their ſingular Privilege, that the Holy Ghoſt ſhould deſcend into their breaſts, and ſo poſſeſs them with Divine inſpirations, that what they ſpake, or wrote, became Oracular, how little leſs is ours; ſince the Scriptures reveal to us the very ſame truths which the Spirit revealed to them. God heretofore ſpake in them, and now he ſpeaks by them unto us. Their Revelations are become ours; the only difference is, that what God taught them by extraordinary inſpiration, the very ſame truths he teacheth us in the Scripture, by the ordinary illumination of his Spirit. Here, therefore whileſt we diligently converſe in the Book of God, we enjoy the privilege of Prophets. The ſame word of God which came unto them, comes alſo unto us; and that without thoſe ſevere preparations, and ſtrong agonies, which ſometimes they underwent, before God would inſpire them with the knowledge of his Heavenly truth. That is the firſt Motive and Argument.

Secondly, The knowledge which the Scripture teacheth, is for the matter of it the moſt ſublime and lofty in the World. All other ſciences are but poor and beggarly Elements, if compared with this. What doth the Naturaliſt, but only buſie himſelf in digging a little droſſie knowledge, out of the Entrails of the Earth. The Aſtronomer, who aſcends higheſt, mounts no higher than the Cœleſtial Bodies, the Stars and Planets; which are but the outworks of Heaven. But the Scripture pierceth much farther, and lets us into Heaven it ſelf. There it diſcovers the Majeſty and Glory of God upon his Throne; the Eternal

nal Son of God ſitting at his right hand, making a prevailing and Authoritative interceſſion for us: The glittering train of Cherubims and Seraphims, an innumerable company of Angels, and the Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect. So that indeed when you have this Book laid open before you, you have Heaven it ſelf, and all the inconceivable glories of it laid open to your view. What can be more ſublime than the nature of God? And yet here we have it ſo plainly deſcribed by all its moſt glorious Attributes and Perfections, that the Scripture doth but beam forth light to an Eye of Faith, whereby it may be inabled to ſee him who is inviſible. But if we conſider thoſe Goſpel Myſteries the Scripture relates, the Hypoſtatical Union of the Divine, and Humane Nature in Chriſt's incarnation, the Myſtical Union of our perſons to his, by our believing, that the Son of God ſhould be Subſtituted in the ſtead of guilty Sinners; that he who knew no ſin, ſhould be made a Sacrifice for ſin, and the Juſtice of God become reconciled to Man, through the blood of God: theſe are Myſteries ſo infinitely profound as are enough to puzzle a whole College of Angels. Now theſe the Scripture propounds unto us, not only to poſe, but to perfect our underſtanding. For that little knowledge we can attain unto in theſe things, is far more excellent than the moſt comprehenſive knowledge of all things elſe in the World. And where our ſcanty apprehenſions fall ſhort of fathoming, theſe deep myſteries, the Apoſtle hath taught us to ſeek it out with an, ὦ βάθος, *Rom.* 11. 33. *O the depth of the Riches, both of the Knowledge and Wiſdom of God! how unreaſearchable are his Judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!*

Thirdly, The Scripture is an inexhauſtible Fountain of Knowledge, the more you draw from it, the more ſtill ſprings up. It is a deep Mine, and the farther you ſearch

into it, ſtill the richer you find it. It is tedious to read the works and writings of Men often over, becauſe we are ſoon at the bottom of what they deliver, and our underſtanding hath nothing new to refreſh it. But in reading the Scripture it fares with us as it did with thoſe whom Chriſt miraculouſly fed, the bread multiplied under their Teeth, and increaſed in the very chewing of it. So here, while we ruminate and chew on the truths of the Scripture, they multiply and riſe up thicker under our meditation. One great cauſe of the neglect that many are guilty of in reading the Holy Scripture, is a fear that they ſhall but meet with the ſame things again, which they have already read and known; and this they account tedious and irkſome. Indeed if they read it only Superficially and ſlightly, it will be ſo. But thoſe who fix their minds to ponder and meditate upon the word, find new truths ariſing up to their underſtanding, which they never before diſcovered. Look as it is in a Starry night, if you caſt your Eyes upon many ſpaces of the Heavens, at the firſt glance perhaps you ſhall diſcover no Stars there; yet if you continue to look earneſtly and fixedly, ſome will emerge to your view, that were before hid and concealed: So is it with the Holy Scriptures. If we only glance curiouſly upon them, no wonder we diſcover no more Stars, no more glorious truths beaming out their light to our Underſtanding. St. *Auguſtine*, found this ſo experimentally true, that he tells us in his third Epiſtle, that though he ſhould with better capacity, and greater diligence, ſtudy all his Life time, from the beginning of his Childhood to decrepit Age nothing elſe but the Holy Scriptures; yet they are ſo compacted, and thick ſet with truths, that he might daily learn ſomething, which before he knew not. God hath as it were ſtudied to ſpeak compendiouſly in the Scriptures. What a Miracle of brevity is it, that the whole

whole Duty of Man, relating both to God and his Neighbour, ſhould be all compriſed in ten words? Not a word but were the ſence of it drawn out, were enough to fill whole Volumes, and therefore the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 119. 96. *I have ſeen an end of all perfection, but thy Commandments are exceeding broad.* When we have attained the knowledge of thoſe things that are abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, there yet remain ſuch depths of Wiſdom, both in the manner of Scripture expreſſion, and in the myſteriouſneſs of things expreſt, that after our utmoſt induſtry, ſtill there will be left new truths to become the diſcovery of a new ſearch.

Fourthly, The Scripture exhibits to us that knowledge which is neceſſary to Eternal Salvation. *This is Life Eternal to know thee, the only true God and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent, John* 17. 3. *And this knowledge the Scriptures alone can afford us, John*, 5. 39. *So* 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. We need not therefore enquire after blind traditions, or expect any whimſical Enthuſiaſms: the written word contains whatſoever is neceſſary to be known in order to Eternal Salvation, and whoſoever is wiſe above what is written, is wiſe only in impertinences. Now hath God contracted whatever was neceſſary for us to know, and ſummed it up in one Book, and ſhall not we be diligent and induſtrious in ſtudying that which doth ſo neceſſarily concern us? Other knowledge is only for the adorning and embelliſhment of Nature; this is for the neceſſity of Life, of Life Eternal. I have before ſpoken enough concerning the neceſſity of knowledge unto Salvation, and therefore ſhall not farther inlarge. Therefore as St. *Peter* ſaid to Chriſt, *Lord whither ſhall we go, thou haſt the words of Eternal Life*: So let us Anſwer whatſoever may ſeem to call us off from the diligent ſtudy of the Scriptures, Whither ſhall we go, to this we muſt cleave, with this we

will

will converſe, for here alone are the words of Eternal Life.

Fifthly, The Knowledge that the Scripture diſcloſeth is of undoubted Certainty, and perpetual Truth; it depends not upon Probabilities or Conjectures, but the infallible Authority of Chriſt himſelf; he hath dictated it, for whom it is impoſſible to lye. The rule of our Veracity or Truth, is the conformity of our Speech to the exiſtency of Things; but divine Truth and Veracity hath no other Rule beſides the Will of him that ſpeaks it. He muſt needs ſpeak infallible Truth, who ſpeaks things into their beings, ſuch is the omnipotent Speech of God. Whatſoever he declares, is therefore true, becauſe he declares it. Never matter how ſtrange and impoſſible Scripture-Myſteries may ſeem to Fleſh and Blood, to the corrupt and captious underſtandings of natural Men; when the word of God hath undertaken for the Truth, it is as much impiety to doubt of them, as it is Folly to queſtion the reality of what we ſee with our very Eyes. Nay the information of our Senſes, what we ſee, what we hear, what we feel, is not ſo certain, as the truth of thoſe things which God reveals and teſtifies in the Scriptures. And therefore the Apoſtle 2 *Pet.* 1. 18, 19. *Speaking of that Miraculous Voice that ſounded from Heaven. Matth.* 17. 5. *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well Pleaſed.* We, ſaith the Apoſtle, heard this Voice when we were with him in the Holy Mount, but we have alſo a more ſure word of Prophecy; or as the Greek may well be rendred, We account more ſure the word of Prophecy, unto which ye do well, that ye take heed. What a more ſure word than a Voice from Heaven? When God himſelf ſhall vocally bear witneſs to the Truth? Yes, we have a more ſure Word, and that's the Word of Propheſie, recorded in the Old Teſtament. And hence it will follow, that becauſe the Prophecies concerning Chriſt, may ſeem ſomewhat obſcure in Compariſon with this audible Voice from

from Heaven; therefore the teſtimony of obſcure Scripture, is to be preferred before the teſtimony of clear Sence. Now therefore if you would know things beyond all danger, either of Falſhood or Heſitation, be Converſant in the Scripture, where we may take all for certain upon the Word and Authority of that God, who neither can deceive, nor be deceived.

Sixthly, The Scripture alone gives us the true and unerring Knowledge of our Selves. Man that buſies himſelf in knowing all things elſe, is of nothing more ignorant than of himſelf, the Eye that beholds other things, cannot ſee its own ſhape; and ſo the Soul of Man, whereby he underſtands other objects, is uſually ignorant of its own Concernments. Now as the Eye that cannot ſee it ſelf directly, may ſee it ſelf reflexively in a Glaſs; ſo God hath given us his Scripture, which St. *James* compares to a Glaſs, *James* 1. 23. *and holds this before the Soul, wherein is repreſented our true State and Idea.*

There is a four-fold ſtate of Man, that we could never have attained to know, but by the Scriptures.

His ſtate of Integrity.
His ſtate of Apoſtacy.
His ſtate of Reſtitution.
His ſtate of Glory.

The Scripture alone can reveal to us, what we were in our Primitive Conſtitution. Naturally, Holy bearing the Image and Similitude of God, and enjoying his Love, free from all inward perturbations or outward Miſeries; having all the Creatures ſubject to us, and what is much more, our ſelves.

What we were in our ſtate of Apoſtacy or Deſtitution, deſpoiled of all our Primitive Excellencies, diſpoſſeſs'd of all the Happineſs,

Happineſs we enjoy'd, and of all hopes of any for the future; lyable every Moment to the revenge of Juſtice, and certain once to feel it.

What we are in our ſtate of Reſtitution, through Grace, begotten again to a lively hope, Adopted into the Family of Heaven, Redeem'd by the Blood of Chriſt, Sanctified and Sealed by the Holy Spirit, reſtored to the Favour and Friendſhip of God, recovering the initials of his Image upon our Souls here on Earth, and expecting the perfection of it in Heaven.

What we ſhall be in our final State of Glory, cloathed with Light, Crowned with Stars, inebriated with pure ſpiritual Joys. We ſhall ſee God as he is, know him as we are known by him, love him ardently, converſe with him eternally, yea a ſtate, it will be ſo infinitely happy, that 'twill leave us nothing to hope for.

This Four-fold ſtate of Man the Scripture doth evidently expreſs. Now theſe are ſuch things as could never have entred into our Hearts to have imagined, had not the word of God deſcribed them to us, and thereby inſtructed us in the knowledge of our ſelves, as well as of God and Chriſt.

Now let us put theſe ſix particulars together. The Scripture inſtructs us in the knowledge of ſuch things as are intelligible only by divine Revelation, it teacheth us the moſt ſublime and lofty Truths, 'tis a moſt inexhauſtible Fountain of Knowledge, the more we draw, the more ſtill ſprings up; it teaches that Knowledge that is neceſſary to Salvation. It is of undoubted certainty, and perpetual Truth. And Laſtly, it informs us in the knowledge of our Selves; and certainly, if there be any thirſt in you after Knowledge, there needs no more be ſpoken to perſwade you to the diligent ſtudy of the Scripture, which is a rich Store and Treaſury of all Wiſdom and Knowledge.

Thus

Thus we have ſeen how the Scriptures inform the Judgment. Let us now briefly ſee how they reform the Life, and what practical influence they have upon the Souls of Men. Now here the word of God hath a mighty Operation, and that in ſundry particulars.

Firſt, This is that word that convinceth and humbles the ſtouteſt and proudeſt Sinners. There are two ſorts of ſecure Sinners. Thoſe who vaunt it in the Confidence of their own Righteouſneſs; and thoſe who are ſecure through an inſenſibility of their own Wickedneſs. Both theſe the word when it is ſet home with Power, convinceth, humbles, and brings to the Duſt. It deſpoils the Self-Juſtitiary of all that falſe Righteouſneſs he once boaſted of and truſted to. *I was alive once without the Law* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *but when the Commandment came, ſin revived and I dyed*, Rom. 7. 9. It awakens and alarms the ſenſeleſs, ſeared Sinner. How many have there been, that have ſcorned God, and deſpiſed Religion, whom yet one curſe or threat of this word hath made to tremble and fall down before the convincing Majeſty and Authority of it?

Secondly, This is that word that ſweetly comforts and raiſeth them after their Dejections; All other Applications to a wounded Spirit are improper and impertinent. 'Tis only Scripture Conſolation that can eaſe it. *The leaves of this Book are like the leaves of that Tree*, Rev. 22. which were for the healing of the Nations. The ſame Weapon that wounds muſt here work the cure.

Thirdly, This is that word that works the mighty change upon the heart in Renovation. Take a Man that runs on in vile and deſperate Courſes, that ſells himſelf to do Iniquity, and commits all manner of Wickedneſs with Greedineſs, and makes uſe of all the Arguments that reaſon can ſuggeſt; theſe ſeldom reclaim any from their Debaucheries. Or if in ſome few they do reform the Life, yet

they can never change the heart. But now that which no other means can effect, the Word of God can, *Pſal.* 19. 7, *The Law of God is perfect converting the Soul.*

Fourthly, This is that word that ſtrengthens and arms the People of God to endure the greateſt temporal Evils, only in hope of that future reward which it puniſheth.

Fifthly, This is that word that contains in it ſuch a Collection of Rules and Duties, that whoſoever obſerves and obeys, ſhall in the end infallibly obtain everlaſting life. Though I can but juſt mention theſe Heads unto you, yet there is enough in them to perſwade you to be diligent in the Scriptures. *In them* (ſaith our Saviour) *ye think to have Eternal Life.*

We are all of us guilty Malefactors; but God hath been pleaſed to afford us the Mercy of the Book: And what, ſhall we not ſo much as read for our Lives?

This is that Book according to which we muſt either ſtand or fall, be acquitted or condemned Eternally. The unalterable Sentence of the laſt day will paſs upon us, as it is here recorded in this Scripture. Here we may beforehand know our Doom, and what will become of us to all Eternity. *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved, but he that believeth not ſhall be damned.* 'Tis ſaid, *Rev.* 20.12. That when the dead ſtood before God to be Judged, the Books were opened: That is, the Book of Conſcience, and the Book of the Scripture. Be perſwaded to open this Book, and to judge your ſelves out of it before the laſt day: 'Tis not a ſealed Book to you, you may there read what your preſent State is, and foretell what your future will be. If it be a State of Sin and Wrath, ſearch farther; there are Directions how you may change this wretched State for a better. If it be a State of Grace and Favour, there are Rules how to preſerve you in it. 'Tis a word ſuited to all Perſons, all Occaſions, all Exigencies. It informs the Ignorant,

Ignorant, ſtrengthens the Weak, comforts the Diſconſolate, ſupports the Afflicted, relieves the Tempted, reſolves the Doubtful, directs all to thoſe ways which lead to endleſs Happineſs; where, as the Word of God hath dwelt richly in us, ſo we ſhall dwell for ever glorioufly with God.

FINIS.